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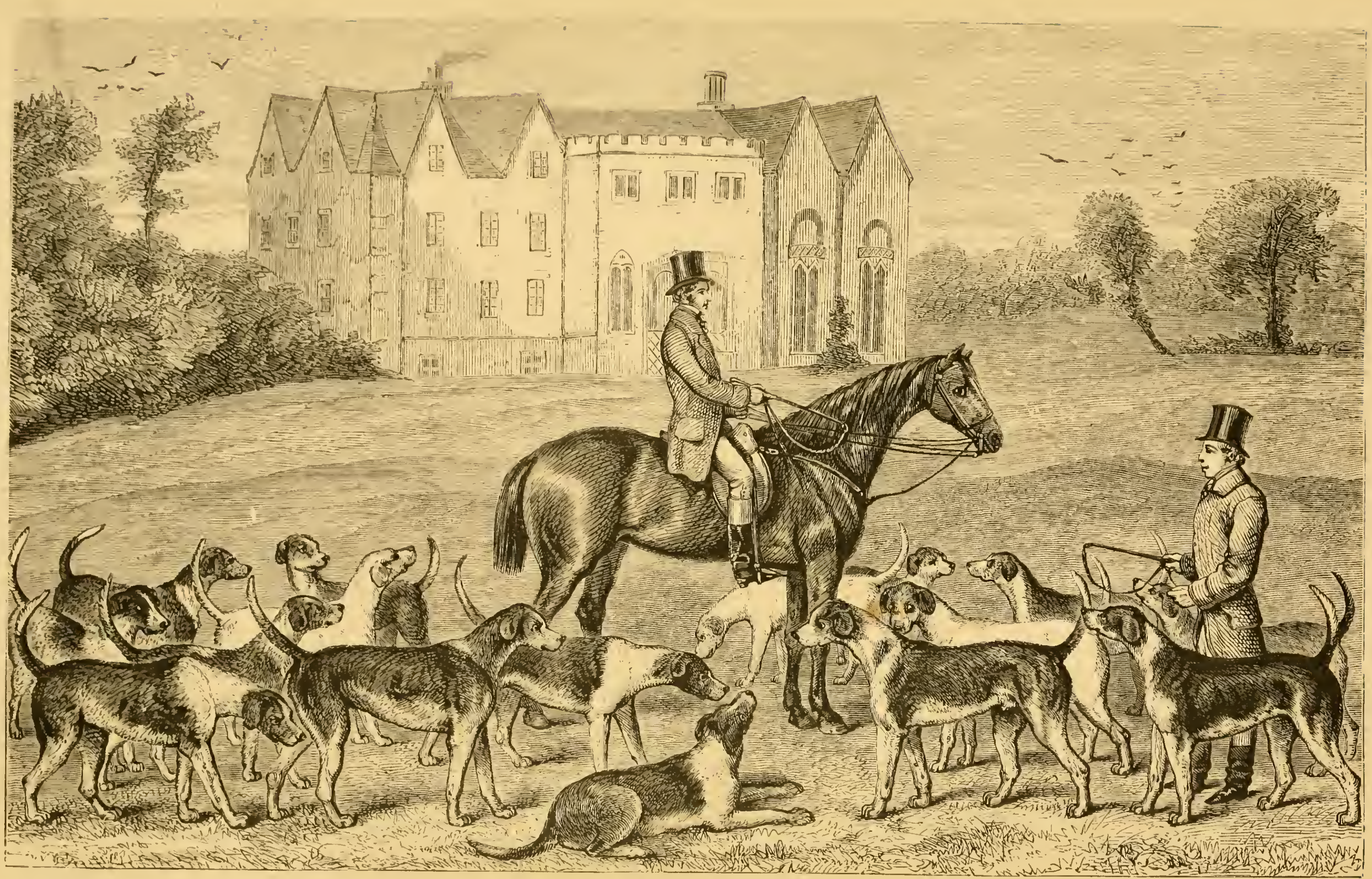
RECOLLECTIONS

OF A

FOX-HUNTER.



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"SCRUTATOR" AT HOME.

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A FOX-HUNTER.

BY

"SCRUTATOR,"

AUTHOR OF

"THE MASTER OF THE HOUNDS,"

ETC. ETC.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1861.

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PREFACE.

The idea of producing this volume for the press was suggested to me by a friend, who had been looking over my sporting memoranda, to which has been affixed, at his particular request, an account of my sporting career, from my earliest recollections. The work has no pretensions to any *lucidus ordo* in the arrangement of the Chapters, which are merely *excerpta* from my scrap-book, somewhat resembling the various receipts contained in a cookery book, which I hope, however, may not prove wholly unpalatable to the Sporting Public.

SCRUTATOR.

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THE RECOLLECTIONS
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It would be difficult to give the exact date when my first predilections for sport had their commencement, but I have some faint recollection of scrambling out of my cot, on to the back of an old favourite hound of my father's, called Partner, which had admittance to the Hall fire, and giving an infantile view halloa, which nearly frightened my nurse into a fit.

From a large white rocking-horse, standing in that same old oak hall, I can well remember also being transferred to the back of a living white pony, with a servant to lead it about the grounds.

Such are my earliest reminiscences; and it is strange how indelibly impressed on the mind are these incidents of our infantile years, when others of later date and far greater importance have long since faded from our memory. My father and grandfather were genuine sportsmen of the olden time, particularly the former, who, as heir to more than ten thousand a-year landed property, had kept his racers (by which, under his own jockeyship, he had won over twenty cups, and pieces of plate, besides stakes), his hunters, and pack of hounds; it is no wonder therefore, that being thus bred, I should have manifested such an early predilection for horses and hounds.

My father's original pack was composed chiefly of the late Lord Egremont's blood; their height averaging twenty-three inches (the standard of the Belvoir fox-hounds), and from their performances they were equal in speed and quickness to any of the present day. As an instance, I may notice their extraordinary rapidity in drawing large thick coverts, through which they dashed as fast as the whipper-in could trot by their side; and when their fox was found, they were at him like lightning, until he was forced to fly or die. But foxes in those times were of a different sort to what they are now, since crossed with the French; and as they generally kennelled in large woodlands, they had an advantage over hounds, by being up and away, with a good start. Moreover, it was not the fashion then to clap hounds on to the back of a fox the moment he broke covert.

I may here mention, to show the stoutness of foxes at that period, two or three runs with my father's old pack; one from Northwood, near North Wraxall, in Wiltshire, where they found their fox, and killed him in a chalk pit, close to the town of Warminster, more than twenty miles in a straight line from where he was found; having passed through twelve or thirteen parishes. The coverts they traversed in this run were Colerne Park, Box Bottoms, Cottles Wood, Bradford Wood, and the Rood Ashton Woodlands, and the pace at which they went away with their fox so great, that my father, although mounted on a thoroughbred hunter, could not catch them until they came to their first and only check, within one field of Charlewood.

They had also two runs with another fox, from Maddington Bushes, near Stonehenge, in Wiltshire, which beat them, by going to ground at the Rocks, near Bath—the ground traversed in these two chases not being much less than forty miles; and when horses and hounds of the present times can beat these performances or equal them, they may then have some grounds for laughing at the bold huntsmen, stout hounds, and stout foxes of the olden time.

Some flyers may say, "We would have burst your foxes in twenty or forty minutes;" but, begging your pardon, gentlemen, I maintain you would have done nothing of the kind. Our hounds were then quite as fast as yours now, and much stouter. Our horses equally, if not better bred than yours, and our fox-hunters better horsemen than any you can produce.

The fox which afforded these two extraordinary chases was never killed by hounds, and lived to a very great age, being well known from his large size and length. He made his kennel on the top of a high ivy-covered wall, which surrounded the poultry yard, at the back of the house we lived in, where he might be seen during the day, enjoying his *otium cum dignitate;* and as he never committed any depredations on the feathered tribes immediately under his eye, he was permitted to hold undisturbed possession of his seat, which he occupied for several years, until, worn out by infirmities, and that plague to the vulpine race, the scab or mange, he was at last found dead one morning, lying on the mat at the hall door; his selection of this spot to lie down and die in, being almost as extraordinary as the two runs he had given, when in his prime of life.

The *vexata questio* as to the comparative speed of fox-hounds of the last and present centuries, would in all probability have been settled last spring or summer, in the proposed match between horses and hounds, to be decided over the Beacon course at Newmarket, by a test which is infallible—time; but as that event has not taken place, I have no hesitation in stating my opinion, that the hounds which might have been employed in that race would not equal in speed Colonel Thornton's bitch, Merkin, which ran four miles in *seven minutes and half a second;* or Mr. Barry's Bluecad, accomplishing the same distance in eight minutes and a few seconds. I have also an impression that in this match the horses would have beaten the hounds.

As a child, I was not nursed in the lap of luxury; and although not, like Achilles, dipped in the waters of the Styx to render me invulnerable to javelins and arrows, I can very well recollect being thoroughly well dipped in the sea, when a squalling brat, to render me invulnerable to sharp cutting winds, and to invigorate my youthful frame; and being sent at an early age to school, where I had also to undergo great severities (not from my master, by whom I was never struck, caned, or flogged), but from senior boys, who fagged me unmercifully. My first feat on horseback was from this school, some forty miles distant, when I requested my father to let me ride home on the commencement of the holidays, and for this purpose a groom was sent up the previous night with my pony; which I remember becoming leg weary at the end of his journey, toppled himself over, and young Scrutator with him, when within sight of *dulce domum.*

The exact age at which I first entered on my duties as second whip to my father's pack of harriers, I cannot now call to my recollection; but under his able tuition, my education in that line was so rapid, that I was soon permitted to hold the first place, Jack being put under me, and I quickly became so thoroughly conversant with kennel management as well, that the feeding of the hounds was generally entrusted to my care.

During this period I had also hunted occasionally with fox-hounds, which rendered me gradually disinclined to the pursuit of the timid hare; although from our pack being mostly composed of thorough-bred fox-hounds, we had often a good straight clipping run (these, however, forming the exceptions to our general rule), and my ardour for the "noble science" increasing, I at length persuaded my father to give up the harriers, and allow me to substitute a few couples of fox-hounds in their place, so that at the early age of twenty I became M. F. H., and began hunting my own hounds. From my father's long experience in fox-hunting as well as hare-hunting, his unrivalled abilities both as a rider and huntsman to his own pack, it was impossible for me to have been placed under more able tuition as to the management of horses and hounds; in fact, he was acknowledged to be the very best rider of his time, and as a huntsman, no one was then, or could be now, his superior.

One of his maxims on horsemanship was, that a good rider had no business ever to fall, without his horse being down with him; and from this being so often inculcated in my boyish riding lessons, both with and without stirrups, I may date my entire escape from any serious injury by a fall during my whole hunting career; and when a young man, I may say that none could ride more fearlessly, believing it next to an impossibility for any horse to throw me fairly out of the saddle. The only two serious accidents I ever met with in the hunting field, were, one in riding against rising grounds through a doorway out of a farmyard, when, had not the upper lintel given way, my neck must have been broken; and the other, when my horse, in galloping through an open gateway, brought my knee-pan in contact with the post. On both these occasions I was obliged to roll out of the saddle, and lie down on the ground for some minutes, from the excruciating pain.

I have had my share of falls with my horse, but seldom without him; for although riding unmade hunters, my casualties were few and far between, from possessing a quick eye, firm seat, and a powerful arm; and having ridden with (not against) some of the best fox-hunters of their time—Sir Francis Burdett, Tom Smith, Lord Kintore, Lord Ducie, and others of minor notoriety, I have been often put to the test in keeping my place with the hounds: my lack of accidents, therefore, must be attributed to holding my horse within bounds, and handling him with discretion at his fences, when distressed.

Although hunting my own hounds for nearly thirty years, I have joined others in the field—the Duke of Beaufort's, Assheton Smith's, the Craven, the Hampshire, when kept by Mr. Villebois, Sir John Cope's, Sir Thomas Mostyn's, in Oxfordshire, the New Forest, the Vale of White Horse, Old Berks, &c., &c., so that I have had some experience in crossing unknown countries, as well as my own. Neither in the kennel was I bigoted to my own sort of hound, having crossed them with the best blood then going:—the Dukes of Beaufort and Grafton's, Earl Fitzwilliam's, Lord Lonsdale's, Sir T. Mostyn's, Mr. Osbaldiston's, and Mr. Ward's. My first pack was composed of drafts from other kennels, principally unentered hounds, of which I bought to a large extent; and after selecting the best bred, if not the best looking, the others were handed over to friends occupied in the same line of business. But, some few years after, on the opportunity being afforded me, I purchased the pack belonging to the renowned John Ward, to which some twelve or fourteen couples of my best old hounds were added; and I think I may venture to affirm that I became then master of a kennel of hounds which, in power, symmetry, and performances, have never been surpassed, and I believe never will be; for after their fox was found, they required the assistance neither of huntsman nor whipper-in. I had only to show them the covert they were to draw, and if there was a fox in it, they gave me no further trouble until he was either killed or run to ground.

Although there exists a very great diversity of opinion in regard to the height and size of fox-hounds—some maintaining that a small hound can more easily creep through a fence than a large one can jump over it; and others contending that large hounds can cross a stiff country with less exertion than little ones—there is a general harmony of ideas, or almost unanimous agreement, amongst experienced masters of hounds and huntsmen, as to shape, make, and symmetry; and in this respect the breeders of small hounds have decidedly the best of the argument, since it is much more easy to produce a clever pack, under twenty-four inches, than one above that standard; and there is another recommendation in favour of the Liliputian race—that they consume less oatmeal. They are more easily managed also, and kept in more servile subjection; for the lash of the whip which would almost cut a small hound in half would only excite the choler of a big burly brute of twenty-five or twenty-six inches. In my own kennels I experienced great difficulty in preserving order by whipcord alone, and, after a fair trial, gave up the contest in favour of milder measures.

It was highly amusing to see old Philip Payne, the celebrated huntsman to the Badminton Pack, drawing his favourites for inspection, and the rush with which they would spring out of the lodging-room, nearly knocking the old man off his legs; but he bore these onsets, or outsets, with the most imperturbable good humour, patting their heads all the while, they, apparently, venting threats, both loud and deep, against their venerable master. Poor old Philip! a better judge of breeding or hunting hounds never existed, or a cleverer or kinder kennel huntsman.

I may here mention an instance of the extreme docility and generous disposition of fox-hounds of this class, notwithstanding their outward rudeness of address and ferocity of character when excited by ill treatment. One of my children, a boy between four and five years old, was missed one afternoon, and no one could tell what had become of him; every place was searched in vain, when his nurse, knowing his partiality for playing with the whelps in the green yard, ran down to the kennel, in dread of finding him either bitten or half eaten up by some of the brood-bitches, which were so savage, when they had whelps, that no stranger might pass that way. To the girl's horror, her young charge was discovered under a thatched hurdle, playing with some puppies, while their mother kept watch at the mouth of her den, and it was not without much coaxing that she would allow the feeder to drag him forth, much against the inclination of his foster-mamma, who continued licking his face as if he belonged to her family. Of course the child got a good share of cuffs and smacks to counterbalance these canine caresses, and an extra quantity of soap and water, to cleanse him from the impurities with which he came in contact. But all these failed to cure him of his propensity to gambol with the tenants of the kennel, since on another occasion he was found in the midst of the pack, riding on the back of one of the largest dog-hounds, licking him about the head with his tiny whip, for which the hound cared no more than for the blow of a rat's tail, and surrounded by the other hounds, who appeared most anxious to obtain some little share of the favours the child was lavishing on the honoured individual.

Mobbing, or hallooing a fox to death formed no part of our system; we were glad to give him a fair start, in the hope of his giving us in return a good run, having more reliance on our hounds' noses, speed, and power, to overhaul him at last; and, to tell the truth, we were not so over-burdened with the wily animals as to dispose of them in the reckless manner adopted in the present day.

The longitude and latitude of old fox-hunting countries have been often severely commented upon, and yet the evil still continues; the generality of hunting countries being still too extensive, and not sufficiently worked to keep foxes in wind. Large coverts, especially, require drawing once a week throughout the season, and I remember a large wood called Southgrove, which, when belonging to the Craven country, during Mr. Ward's tenure of office, was of little use, save for cub-hunting; on being transferred to Assheton Smith, who met there once a week, it soon became famous for straight-running foxes. Woodlands should never lie fallow; they want continually stirring and working, like clay land, to be productive of good sport.

From the increase of game-preserving, and the importation of French foxes, may be dated the scarcity of really good runs; instead of the long, lanky-looking animal of the last century, ill fed, and often going supperless to his kennel, which would run nearly from sunrise to sunset, we find a thick, short, plethoric-looking little brute, as sleek, as fat, and almost as sleepy as a dormouse, which, on a good scenting day, is blown up in fifteen or twenty minutes, having been in trouble after the first three fields; and when, by accident, or a check, he is enabled to hold on for ten or twenty more, he is called a gallant old fox, and the run he has afforded is immediately stuck into Bell's Life, as something out of the common course.

I met a gentleman a few days since (January, 1860), returning from hunting with the North Warwickshire pack, and to my query as to sport he replied—"We had a grand meet, somewhat over two hundred horsemen,—found in B. Wood, badgered and hammered him about for some little time; at last he went away over a few fields, when I saw him cross the road and take refuge in a pig-sty, whence he was unceremoniously pulled out by the hounds." This is the sort of every-day finale to what are called fox-chases in the present era. A multiplicity of hounds—ditto of red coats, trying to scream or mob a fox to death before he is half awake—a helter-skelter scurry for two or three miles, which finishes off the fat, pursy animal; and this is called a splendid thing! Bah! How many of these two or three hundred men in buckram would be in at the death of a thorough good, straight-going fox of the olden time, after crossing twelve or fourteen miles of country? Not half a score.

Fox-hunting in the last century was followed by genuine old sportsmen, from real love of the chase, and everything connected with it; and how many instances could I quote in support of this assertion! Such as the fine old Yorkshire Squire, George Kirton, who lived to the patriarchal age of one hundred and twenty-five, and who, after having followed the chase beyond his eightieth year, regularly attended unkennelling the fox till he had attained his hundredth. Such as the Duke of Cleveland, who during many years hunted his own hounds six days a week, and who, when it was objected to his kennel, that it was so near the house that the savour of the boiler might sometimes find its way into it, replied that probably it might, but that "all his family were too well bred to fox-hunting to mind that." Such as an old medical man, well known to the sportsmen of the last generation, who, when a fox had been unfortunately caught in a trap set in his garden for vermin, and had got its leg broken, took infinite pains to set it, tended it with the utmost care till it got well, and then, setting it at liberty, hunted and killed it in the legitimate manner. But the old race is gone, and hunting is now followed for fashion's sake—our Nimrods of the nineteenth century know little, and care less, about hunting or hounds. They go out for a gallop, or to meet their friends at the covert side; and after a bit of a skurry, trot home about two or three o'clock in the afternoon, perfectly satisfied. Well, if they are satisfied, so are we, that they condescend to give countenance to the national sport; and it is far better for them to ride even to the place of meeting, than remain idle at home, or playing at a billiard or card table in some fashionable watering place, such as Cheltenham or Leamington.

My experience in fox-hunting tells a very different tale—an early breakfast—hard work throughout the day—a late dinner, at the fashionable hour of eight or nine o'clock in the evening; scores of times, I have been riding after my hounds when it was so dark that I could scarcely see my horse's head before me; and when the moon rose, we have been rattling about big woodlands, from changing foxes, until ten or twelve at night.

CHAPTER II.

Twice-told Tales never before written.—A Curiosity in Natural History.—The Fox who had lost his Tail.—Sir Lewen Glynn in the Saddle.—A Model Fox Covert.—Five Miles in Twelve Minutes.—Performances of old John Ward's Pack.—Testimonials of the Right Sort.—A Page from the *Libro d'Oro.*

"A southerly wind and a cloudy sky
Proclaim a hunting morning;
Before the sun rises we nimbly fly,
Dull sleep and a drowsy bed scorning.
To horse, my boys, to horse, away!
The chase admits of no delay;
On horseback we've got, together we'll trot,
On horseback we've got, together we'll trot.
Leave off your chat, see the cover appear;
The hound that strikes first, cheer him without fear;
Drag on him, ah! wind him, my steady good hounds!
Drag on him, ah! wind him, the cover resounds!"
Old Song.

I might fill volumes with our runs, which would be of little interest to those unacquainted with our country; but a few may be cursorily mentioned from my note book, as proving that our hounds could run as well as hunt.

"Three o'clock, p.m. Found a fox in Greatwood, which, after a turn round the covert (more than one hundred acres), went away towards Vastern; being headed, the hounds turned short with him, and kept close to his brush until he again reached Greatwood, through which they rattled him into the Dauntsey Vale below; over this they went at a tremendous pace, crossing a nasty brook (in which many got a ducking), and the Malmesbury turnpike road, into Charlton pond plantation; through this and Ravenswood, over Somerford Common, into Webb's woods (three miles extent of woodlands without changing scents), up to Lidiard Park, where they got up to their fox, and forcing him out of covert, killed him in the open by themselves, without any assistance from the find to the finish. Time, one hour and fourteen minutes. Ground traversed by the hounds, not much under thirty miles."

After leaving Greatwood the second time, until they were returning from Lidiard with their fox's head, I never caught a glimpse of the pack; and all the best riders, like myself, were completely shut out of the run, from the quiet and quick manner in which they slipped away from covert;

and having come to no check, we never could catch them. From the place where they killed their fox, our hounds had then to travel twenty-eight miles more before reaching their kennel."

I have not related this as the best or longest chase we ever had, or anything like it, but it was the very first my eye rested upon when looking over my hunting MS., and being tolerably good, it proved at the same time what our pack would do without assistance from huntsman or whipper-in.

Another short notice of a clipper succeeds thus:

"Did not find until we reached Stanmore, a bad-scenting, windy day. Hounds slipped away with their fox down wind, but I just heard them going, and was soon with them. Run our fox over the earths in Large's Covert, then across the enclosures as if making his point for Beckhampton Gorse; being headed near a village, he turned away for the downs, with his head in the direction of Auburn Chase. Tacked again down wind; hunted up to him in a turnip-field, where he jumped up in view—heads up and sterns down, raced him up a steep hill (which stopped the horses), over the open again, and he never broke view until run into beyond Barbury Castle—Jack, the under-whip, first up, on his thorough-bred Irish mare."

In juxtaposition with these, I will place three long badgering days, through heavy woodlands, with a bad scent. "Found a fox in Beckle Wood, near Hartham Park, which first broke away for Sheldon, where, being headed, he turned to the right down wind, and crossing the Bath turnpike-road below Corsham Park, reached Lackam Wood, swam the river Avon, and passing through Butcher's Copse, made for Lockswell; headed back into Bowden Hill coverts, through these, and tried the earths again in Butcher's Copse, which being well stopped, he again broke away through Lockswell into Bowood Park, across the upper part of the lake, and on towards Blacklands Copse, from which, being turned by a dog, he ran back through the pleasure-grounds of Bowood, and away to Derry Hill woods, where the hounds got up to him, and after a good rattling through these thick coverts, they forced him out again, and pulled him down in Bowood Park."

The distance on the map from point to point, straight across country, is about nine miles, and I think this fox must have travelled over eighteen before he was brought to hand.

From Bowood Park, the seat of the Marquis of Lansdowne, we had another severe day for hounds. After running and changing foxes about these coverts and the Spye Park woods until three o'clock in the afternoon, one at last broke away over the vale for Blackland Copse, through which he passed without lingering a moment, and went straight across the Beckhampton Downs to Wilcot, in Assheton Smith's country, where the hounds were running into him in view, when he crept into a rabbit-hole in the bank of a fir plantation, from which they would have pulled him out by themselves, but I was silly enough to listen to the entreaties of a friend to spare his life, in the hopes of his affording us another good gallop. We were then, past four o'clock on a wintry day, more than thirty miles from the kennels, to which we had to jog on without our fox's head, which the hounds had so well merited.

The other was from Beechwood on Lansdown, near Bath, to Norwood, in Wiltshire, some six or seven miles distant, back from this strong, thick covert to Beechwood again, and off once more to Norwood, when, within twenty yards of the wood, myself, hounds, and fox rolled over the last hedge together, a large stake having run into my horse's shoulder, which brought us both down. This was an old dark-coloured fox, with a yellow instead of a white throat, and out of a large field at starting there were only three in at the finish, although the hounds met them twice during this toilsome, hilly, and woodland run; and without the accident, I do not believe my horse could have carried me a mile further.

This was one of the most severe days' work for hounds and horses that I can now call to mind; from the fox holding to the thickest coverts in his line, and running over the most hilly part of the country, and with all his windings and turnings I believe he must have traversed at least thirty miles of ground.

I once remember killing an entirely black fox, which the hounds ran into and broke up before I could get up with them, or I should have saved his skin, as a curiosity in this country. But the toughest animals in fox shape I have had to deal with were those without brushes. We were at one of these wizards in the Derry Hill woods, hammering him about for hours, and the foot men in the drives (placing themselves at the point he crossed) knocking him also off his legs with squalors, yet he beat us at last in the dark, although I resolved not to go home without his head. What became of him I could not tell; but as we could not get two couples of hounds away from the covert, I conclude they finished him off at last, for we never found him again.

"Found our fox in Catcomb Wood (a very thick covert of a hundred acres), gave him a couple of turns there, when he went away through Avon Grove to Christian Malford Wood (another thick covert of one hundred and twenty acres), from which he broke over the vale to Turnham Brake, opposite Cowage Copse. Finding the earths stopped, he retraced his ground back to Catcomb Wood, where the hounds gave him another rattler round covert, and raced him away to Christian Malford Wood again. He then broke the lower side, through Bittlesea Wood, on towards Wootton Bassett, where, being headed in the road, he turned to the left over the canal, down through the Dauntsey Vale, across the river Avon, for Malmesbury Common; here, being headed, he ran back by Draycot Park, through Sutton and Foxham, over the river again and the canal up to Bremhill Grove, where the hounds got up with him, and away this tough old fox came again across the vale, through Avon Grove and Christian Mulford Wood without lingering a moment, and was pulled down in the open fields below Bittlesea Copse. The only man who rode this run throughout was Sir Lewen Glynn, all the field being stopped by the river Avon, through which Glynn, although not able himself to swim, swam his horse without hesitation, and reached the opposite bank in safety, notwithstanding it was a cold, bitter day, with a cutting east wind, the sleet falling, and absolutely freezing in our coats. By this resolute act Glynn kept alone with the hounds for more than an hour, and he was the only man besides myself up at the finish, when, both our horses being beaten, he held mine above Christian Malford Wood, whilst I ran in with the hounds on foot, to save the fox's brush for him."

To those who know the country, it may afford some amusement in calculating the extent of ground traversed by this gallant old fox, and I believe if all his turnings and windings, in covert and out, are taken into account, it will amount to little less than forty miles. It was, as I have stated, a cold, miserable day, with a bad scent, so that the hounds could never press their fox. This Catcomb Wood is the most beautiful fox covert I have ever seen in any country. It lies sloping towards the south, with grass, rushes, and blackthorn, as thick in some parts as a gorse brake, in the centre of a fine fox-hunting vale, chiefly pasture land; and as to its extent, just the thing to suit the taste of a master of fox-hounds.

The foxes it produced during the time I hunted it were generally stout and straight runners, taking their line into the Vale of White Horse country, where we had generally the good luck to overhaul them, after running through the long string of woodlands called Webb's Woods and Lydiard Plain. Others we killed from the same covert on the open downs, after running over the vale through Compton.

From Beckhampton Gorse we had also a few clippers occasionally.

One, the fastest skurry I ever saw, when the hounds ran five miles in twelve minutes, all over turf without a fence, pulling him down by themselves, and beating every horse out (many thoroughbred ones), and a field of over two hundred horsemen from the three adjoining hunts, with their masters and best riders, the Duke of Beaufort, Assheton Smith, and other celebrated performers.

From this gorse we had also a very good run to Lydiard Park, beyond Wootton Bassett; and from Greatwood, in the Christian Malford Vale, we ran a fox to within five miles of Farringdon, in Berkshire. I make no mention of bursts varying from fifteen to fifty minutes, which, on good scenting days, any other pack of well-bred fox-hounds might have finished off in as good style as our own; but, for perseverance and working through difficulties, the blood of old John Ward stood unrivalled; and as a proof of the estimation in which it was held, Mr. Assheton Smith had no less than thirty-six couples in his kennel by my hounds at one time, in the year 1838, twelve years after they had been in my possession.

Our hounds were of great size and power, with clean necks and shoulders, good legs and feet, and lengthy frames, many of the dogs standing twenty-six inches in height, and the bitches from twenty-three to twenty-five. When I first purchased Ward's pack, it was thought they could never work through our hilly home country, or force a fox from our thick blackthorn woods; but in this very country they showed themselves to as great advantage as on the large open pastures of North Wilts; for, possessing high courage and spirit, they dashed over the stuff which a smaller hound would be obliged to creep through, and being beautiful drawers, spreading wide over every foot of covert, the foxes were obliged to fly, and the thundering crash with which they came down these hill-side woods was quite enough to scare their game away.

Jim Hills, the celebrated huntsman of the Heythrop pack, who at the time I hunted this country was first whipper-in to the late Lord Ducie, then Master of V. W. H. Hounds, told me, only two years ago, that he had never forgotten the style in which my hounds used to draw covert; and the late Duke of Beaufort, who at one period frequently honoured our fixtures with his presence, paid us the highest compliment by saying to me one day: "Whenever I want to have a good day's sport, I come out with your hounds." Be it remembered he was himself Master of one of the finest packs of fox-hounds in the world, and hunting the country adjoining mine; and he told me that one day, when riding into Bath (from illness, I was not out), he watched from Lansdown my hounds find their fox in Beechwood, race him over the Vale by themselves, and kill him in the open, before he could reach Swainswick coverts, without a horseman being within a mile of them.

As a memento of those times, I subjoin a list of the members of our Hunt Club.

The Earl of Kerry, Bowood Park.
Sir Lewen Glynn, Bart., Bath.
T. S. Estcourt, M.P., New Park.
Paul Methuen, Corsham House.
Walter Long, M.P., Rood Ashton.
Joseph Neild, M.P., Grittleton.
John Neild, M.P., Grittleton.
Captain Boldero, M.P., Grittleton.
John Starkey, Spye Park.

Robert Hale, M.P., Alderley.
John Hale, Cottles House.
John Fuller, Neston Park.
Neston Fuller, Monk's House.
Captain Dewell, Dauntsey House.
N. Goddard, Cliffe Pipard.
Wadham Locke, Ashton Lodge.
Francis Locke, Rowdeford House.
C. J. Boode, Lucknam Park.
John Lovell, Cole Park.
Major Phipps, Wans House.
Major Preston, Bath.
George Tugwell, Bath.
W. Tugwell, Devizes.
Captain Wallace, Devizes.
P. S. Coxe, Ardington.
Vaughan Jenkins, Preston.
H. Morgan, Draycot Park.
Werden Bayntun, Bath.
W. Rooke, Lackham House.
— Broome, Rudloe.
I. J. Horlock, The Rocks.

CHAPTER III.

Fox-hound Kennels of the Present Day.—Aristocratic Fox-hounds.—A disputed Point of Dog-lore.—Varieties of Fox-hounds.—Fair Play for the Fox.—The Duke of Beaufort's Hounds.—Cover-side Chronology.—The Tidworth Pack.—The Heythrop Hounds.—Lord Southampton and Mr. Osbaldiston.—Lord Middleton and Sir Tatton Sykes.—Petworth.—Dead Beat.—Old Firebrand.

"*Nobleman.*—Huntsman, I charge thee, tender well my hounds;
Broch Merriman—the poor cur is imbossed,
And couple Clowden with the deep-mouthed Broch.
Saw'st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good,
At the hedge corner, in the coldest fault?
I would not lose the dog for twenty pound.
Huntsman.—Why, Bellman is as good as he, my lord;
He cried upon it at the merest lops,
And twice to-day picked out the dullest scent;
Trust me, I take him for the better dog."

Taming of the Shrew.

Four of the oldest and most fashionable packs of fox-hounds in the present time are those of the

Dukes of Rutland and Beaufort, and the Earls of Yarborough and Fitzwilliam; which have been maintained in their respective families, from father to son, for more than a hundred years; and from these are principally descended the numerous other packs which are spread over Great Britain.

Of these four kennels the Duke of Rutland's stands at the head, for power and symmetry combined; and I think, taken all together, are decidedly the cleverest pack of fox-hounds in England on the flags. Whether they are the cleverest in the field also, I have no means of ascertaining. The Belvoir Pack are distinguished from any other I have seen, by that peculiar colour of black and tan, and a silkiness of coat, or fineness of hair, not generally seen in other fox-hounds, except in those crossed with this blood; and if, as some old sporting writers assert, without any positive grounds for the opinion, there has been a cross some two hundred years ago between the greyhound and fox-hound, this pack, from their clean necks and shoulders, appear in favour of that supposition, although I do not believe such to have been the case; for our Nimrods of olden times, to whom fineness of nose was of paramount importance, and who loved hunting for the sake of hunting, not racing, appear to me the most unlikely men to have crossed their fox-hounds with greyhound blood.

There are, however, still visible the evidences of two distinct varieties, if not more, of fox-hounds, although daily becoming less perceptible from intermixture—the smooth and the wire-haired, which differ in form and features. The smooth-coated fox-hound is of smaller size, with a small, neat, and rather thin head, arched neck, and more compact form than the wire-haired, which has a large head, coarse neck, and long powerful frame, with great bone and muscular power. The other variety is between the harrier and fox-hound, two packs of which I have seen in Wales, and about whose *unde derivatur* there could be no question.

On first seeing one of these packs out hunting, before I knew anything of their descent, I immediately remarked to a friend, "Those are not fox-hounds."

"Not foxhounds?" he replied; "why, they have never hunted anything but foxes for years, and are considered quite a crack pack."

"That," I said, "does not alter the case; they are not thorough-bred fox-hounds, of that I am positive, although clever hounds of the sort, and no doubt may show very good sport."

And on his making further inquiries (I would not ask a question, being thoroughly convinced, from their appearance, of the fact), he was told that they were an original pack of harriers crossed with fox-hounds.

How, or when the dog we call a fox-hound was produced, there would be great difficulty in determining, although it is not unreasonable to suppose there might have been an original species of hound, from which our several varieties, with judicious crossing, are descended.

The Talbot is a dog spoken of as of great antiquity, and is described by a very old writer on sporting as "a large, heavy, and slow hound; black, black tanned, or liver coloured, with a round thick head, short nose, uprising large open nostrils; ears large and thin, hanging much below his chaps; the flews of his upper lip almost two inches lower than his nether jaw, indicating a more deep mouth and a loud ringer; back strong and straight, and rather rising, showing toughness and endurance; fillets broad and thick, enabling him to gather up his legs quickly and without pain; his knuckle bones round and hidden, showing he will not tire; thighs round, and ham straight; tail long and rush grown, or big at the setting on and tapering; the hair under his belly hard and wiry, a proof of hardness; his legs large, bony, and lean; foot round, high knuckled, and well clawed, with a hind sole. The general composition of his body so just and even, that no level may distinguish whether his fore part or hinder be the higher. Lastly, this hound has the most powerful scent, and delights most in blood, with a natural inclination to hunt dry-foot."

Taking this rather prolix description of the Talbot into consideration, it is no very wide stretch of the imagination to suppose the large coarse fox-hound descended from this original with a mixture of the wolf-dog or rough-haired greyhound; in fact, I should think the very first cross would assuredly be, to all appearance, intents, and purposes, the very dog we call a fox-hound of the larger species.

When wolves abounded in this country, there were, no doubt, two varieties of dog employed in their destruction, if not more; the wolf-dog, a large fierce animal, which would run by nose as well as sight, most likely a cross between the blood-hound or mastiff, and greyhound; and the rough-coated deer-hound, still to be found in Scotland, and among the wild hills of Wales, preserving the original characteristics of great power, speed, and courage; and from these, in all probability, are descended our present breeds of fox-hounds. That a great variety of hounds existed in the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First may be gathered from the quaint old Markham, who flourished as a good authority in those times, on sporting and veterinary subjects.

"If you would have your kennel for *sweetnesse* of cry, then you must compound it of some large dogges, that have deep solemn mouthes, and are swift in spending, which must, as it were, beere the base in consort; then a double number of *roaring and loud ringing* mouthes, which must beere the counter-tenor; then some hollow, plaine, sweete mouthes, which must beere the meane or middle part; and so with these three parts of music, you shall make your cry perfect. And herein you shall observe that these *hounds* thus mixt *do run just and even together, and not hang off loose one from another,* which is the vilest sight that may be; and you shall understand that this composition is best to bee made of the swiftest and largest deep-mouthed dogge, the slowest middle-sized dogge, and the shorter-legged slender dogge. Amongst these you cast in a couple or two of small *singing* beagles, which, as small trebles, may wacke amongst them. The cry will be a great deal the more sweeter."

The quotation from this patriarchal sportsman, although of not much interest to fox-hunters of this date, may probably afford some amusement, if not instruction, to masters of harriers, who may be particular as to the harmony of their pack, although all decent appearances must have been sacrificed to *melody*, still a very favourite name with thistle-whippers. Notwithstanding this attention to the music of the pack, it is very evident from the following observations of Gervase Markham, that he was as much a stickler for pace, as some of our present fast school of fox-hunters.

"Albeit the labour be for the time most violent, but it is not of so long continuance as that which is more slow, and to run twelve score swiftly is not so painful as to walk twenty miles; for you must understand that these swift hounds, out of their metall and swiftness, do soone overshoot and run beyond the sent, and then retiring back upon it againe, give the horse time to ease himself, and catch new breath, whereas the slower dogges carrying the sent ever before them, keep your horse in a continuall labour, which is more paineful, and makes him a tough enduring lackey, but not a most swift running gentleman; besides, the many faults and casting about of the swift dogges adde such a comfort unto the horse, who perceiveth the strength of his labour to have no ease till he come up to those faults, that he will, out of the willingnesse of his own nature, double his courage to pursue them swiftly, seeing his ease is ever the greater, by how much he keepeth ever neerer to the hounds ; for the danger of bursting, melting his grease, and other infirmities, the discretion of the rider and skill of the keeper must prevent."

My readers will perhaps pardon me for making one more quotation from this ancient authority, in which, I think, he has very nearly hit the bull's eye.

"If it bee for cunning hunters, you shall breed your dogges from the slowest and largest of the northern hounds, and the swiftest and slenderest of the west country hounds, being both male and female approved to be staunch, faire, and even running of perfect fine sent, and not given to hie off (*skirters*) or look for advantages. These hounds will neither be so exceeding slow, that you will wait many days without some fruit of your labour, nor so unnimble that you shall need men to help them over every hedge, as I have many times seen to my much wonder, but, having both strength and nimbleness, will hold you in continual delight and exercise ; for they are neither so swift that they will far outrunne the sent, and so fetch many tedious rings to recover it, nor so slow that for want of speed they will lose the sent, and let it grow cold by their own lasinesse, so that I conclude the middle-sized hound of good strength, sound mouth, and reasonable speed, which will make a horse gallop fast and not runne, is the best for the true art and use of hunting,"

It is manifest, therefore, that in Markham's time two distinct breeds of fox-hounds were well known; and this distinction may be clearly seen in the kennels of the Duke of Beaufort and Lord Fitzwilliam, as belonging to the larger class, when compared with those of the Duke of Rutland and Lord Yarborough; this distinctive difference has, however, been gradually wearing away, by the crosses so continually made between the two species; but even at this date, it is not unusual to find specimens in several kennels, which clearly show their original descent, by a width of head, coarseness of neck, and bulkiness of frame, generally so much at variance with the fashionable form of the present day.

Some thirty years ago, when making a tour of inspection to some of the first kennels of the country, I was much struck with the different appearance of the Belvoir and Cottesmore packs. The Duke of Rutland's hounds, then under the management of Goosey, were, respecting framework, as nearly perfection as possible, looking as neat and bright in their coats as a new pin, averaging in height about twenty-three inches. A very striking contrast was presented in the late Lord Lonsdale's pack, which was of a totally different character, particularly perceptible in the dog-hounds. Some of these stood twenty-six inches in height, with rather wide, long heads, and a good share of neck-cloth; they were also put loosely together, although possessing straight legs and good feet, with plenty of bone and muscle. The characters of these two packs were also very different in the field. The Duke's were quick, active, and mettlesome—forcing the fight, and running into their fox in the open. The movements and tactics of the Cottesmore just the reverse—hunting the fox being their forte, and this they certainly accomplished to perfection. Their style of going was like that of a large thorough-bred horse, striding over the ground at a long lurching pace; but their noses were always in the right place, and they could get forward with a bad scent, hold to the line, and wind up their fox at last with untiring pertinacity.

But the pack which approached nearest to my own ideas of what fox-hounds ought to be was that of Earl Fitzwilliam; their standard ranging between twenty-four and twenty-five inches, with immense power and muscle. When we speak of a *handsome* animal of any description—of a fine man or woman also—we expect to find a combination of form and features, associated with corresponding height, and so with fox-hounds—to deserve the name of a *fine* pack, they should be of a certain standard. *Handsome* and *pretty* have two distinct significations, and I must confess my dislike to a term in very common use, describing fox-hounds as "beauties."

The Belvoir pack has stood high in public estimation for many years, and in these latter times is become so very fashionable that there are few lists of fox-hounds throughout the kingdom where the Duke of Rutland's name does not appear. I say *fashionable*, because these hounds having obtained the reputation of being the fastest in England, our pace advocates have selected that blood, more, I believe, on that account than for any other reason; the only topic we hear discussed at the covert side, anent fox-hunting, being pace. It is the fashion with our young huntsmen of the present school to clap their hounds on to the fox's brush at breaking, and this is applauded as a most laudable act, showing the genius and alacrity of the young English huntsman; whereas, it is in truth and reality most unsportsmanlike, and the surest plan to spoil a good run.

There are occasions when a huntsman may and must take advantage of a fox, to bring him to hand for the sake of the hounds; but the practice of clapping them close to his brush, when he first breaks covert, is contrary to all the established rules of fox-hunting, and the clearest proof of a huntsman's *want of confidence in his own hounds.* Now, if there ever was a time when foxes required a little law, it is the present, seeing they are generally too fat and ill-bred to outrun hounds. Why then all this *hurry-scurry* work, before the animal is well upon his legs?

The Duke of Beaufort's fox-hounds are also an old established pack of great celebrity, although differing entirely in appearance and character from the Belvoir, and clearly of another strain, possessing larger frames, and a more wiry texture of coat. These hounds have always had the reputation of being both speedy and stout; and for hard rough work, I believe no pack could in my time surpass them. The cross with this blood in my own kennel proved most successful, and I have therefore sufficient cause to speak highly of it. My neighbour's pack, the celebrated William Codrington, who hunted the South Wilts country, was composed almost entirely of hounds from this kennel; as was that also belonging to Mr. Nicol, who at that time hunted the New Forest. I find moreover, on referring to Mr. Ward's stud book, that in the year 1806 he entered two litters of young hounds that season, one of six, the other of four, by the Duke of Beaufort's Pontiff; at the same time, he entered also two litters by Lord Yarborough's Dealer.

Mr. Ward had also a famous hound, named Roderick, by the Duke of Beaufort's Ragland, entered in 1810, from which were lineally descended several of the hounds I purchased of him in the year 1826. As a breeder of fox-hounds, Mr. Ward had obtained the greatest celebrity in his time, and in the year 1766 he had three couples of hounds, four bitches and two dogs, by Mr. Barry's Bluecap; the four former proving all brood bitches, from which the best blood in his kennel was derived; so that his pack had every reason to be fast, being bred chiefly from the most speedy fox-hound of the last century, and I believe not one of the present will surpass him in pace.

Some of the most distinguished packs of that period of which Mr. Ward took notice (besides those already mentioned), were kept by Lords Abingdon, Craven, Monson, Althorpe, and Thanat, the Dukes of Bedford and Richmond, Sir T. Mostyn, Messrs. Meynel, Corbet, Selby, Duke Archer, Carson, Cook, Child, and George. According to the information furnished me by the late Duke of Beaufort, fox-hounds were first permanently established at Badminton in the year 1753, before which, stag-hounds, fox-hounds, and harriers had been alternately kept by his Grace's ancestors.

About the same time, although I am inclined to think rather prior to this date, fox-hounds were also established in the Duke of Rutland's family at Belvoir Castle; and I have a list of noblemen and gentlemen, members of his Grace's hunt, in the year 1758, in number seventy-eight, including two ladies, with two hundred and ninety-four horses, who assembled in and near the good town of Grantham, to do honour to his Grace's foxhounds.

The Earl of Yarborough's pack is said to date its origin from a much earlier period than either of the above, as to which I have no correct information; and in Lord Fitzwilliam's family, fox-hounds have been transmitted from father to son for more than a century, as I find a notice of George Kingston being huntsman previous to the year 1765, when the pack of Mr. Child (who hunted Warwickshire) were purchased and added to the kennels at Mitton Park. These four packs are, I believe, the oldest which have been maintained without interruption in their respective families, and from them the great majority of the kennels throughout Her Majesty's dominions are descended.

Mr. Meynel Ingram, grandson of the celebrated Mr. Meynel, now residing at Hoar Cross House, has also some very old blood in his kennel, and in appearance I know no hounds which look so truly thorough-bred as his, especially the bitches, many of which, for symmetry and length of frame, with fine necks and shoulders, and capital legs and feet, cannot be surpassed; and although I have lately seen the Belvoir and other first-rate kennels, I should feel inclined to select some of these bitches to run a match against any pack in England. The dog-hounds are also very clever, and the Squire of Hoar Cross Hall may feel justly proud of his pets.

Fox-hunting countries have changed masters so frequently during the last twenty-five years, that it is no easy task to trace packs of hounds, formerly well known, through so many variations. The late Duke of Grafton's pack, of considerable antiquity, became some years since the property of the late Assheton Smith, and are now called the Tidworth pack, supported by subscription in that part of Hampshire which Mr. Smith first formed into a hunting country by his own indefatigable exertions, maintaining a splendid hunting establishment solely at his own expense. Previously to the purchase of the Grafton hounds, Mr. Smith possessed a very clever pack of his own breeding, from some of the best blood; and with this addition, the Tidworth kennels would bear comparison with any in England. They have also been under the management of Carter, who lived as huntsman with the Duke of Grafton, and who has a high reputation both in the kennel and the field.

The Heythrop hounds are also part of the Duke of Beaufort's pack, left there when his Grace discontinued hunting the Oxfordshire country; and under the veteran Jim Hills they still continue to afford capital sport. Lord Southampton, who now hunts the late Duke of Grafton's country, from Whittlebury Lodge, has also some very old blood in his kennel, and, I believe, purchased a part, if not the whole pack, belonging to the celebrated Mr. Osbaldiston, having previously, when hunting Leicestershire, become the possessor of the old Oakley pack, which he bought when the Marquis of Tavistock resigned that country.

In the kennel of Lord Middleton, at Birdsall, near Malton, in Yorkshire, now hunting the country so long occupied by Sir Tatton Sykes, are to be found the descendants of Mr. Corbet's pack, who hunted Warwickshire at the end of the last century. These hounds were purchased of Mr. Corbet by a former Lord Middleton, by whom, on his resigning Warwickshire, they were transferred to Sir Tatton Sykes, and by Sir Tatton they have been again handed over to the present Lord Middleton.

At Petworth, in Sussex, the blood of the late Lord Egremont's pack still flourishes; and I am told these hounds are exceedingly powerful and clever, showing excellent sport under their talented huntsman, Squires.

Mr. Drake succeeded Sir Thomas Mostyn in his Oxfordshire country, with whose pack, in bygone days, I have had many a sharp skurry; and I remember once riding an untried four-year old mare, through a very severe run with these hounds, side by side with young Peyton, as he was then familiarly called, when many horses were so thoroughly knocked up that they were left in the field where we killed our fox, and there bedded up with loads of straw, being incapable of moving farther. This young mare being nearly, if not quite thorough bred, I rode home that same night to Oxford, a distance of sixteen miles; but her spirit being stronger than her body, she became alarmingly ill the next day, and did not leave the stable again for several weeks. The next season she proved a capital hunter, and after riding her several years, she was turned out at last for a brood mare.

The country run over that day I cannot now call to mind, but it was a severe one, and the pace first-rate; but I well remember following Peyton over a wide and nasty-looking brook (my mare had never seen water before), and from the high bound she made, she came down on her nose the other side, where we had a bit of a scramble together without parting company, and were soon up and away again after old Firebrand, who was leading the pack that day, and being afterwards stifled, *i. e.* lamed in the stifle joint, I obtained him from Tom Wingfield as a stallion hound.

CHAPTER IV.

Heroes of the Old School.—Sir Francis Burdett at Home and in the Field.—Liberty Hall.—Fishing Extraordinary.—More last words about Assheton Smith.—A tremendous Bulfincher.—A New Name for an Old Friend.—A short game at Follow-my-leader.—Why don't you Holloa?—Arbitrary Architecture.—The Rooks that wouldn't Quit.—A New Style of Dinner Dress.—Pride and Prejudice in the Servants' Hall.—The Tidworth Crystal Palace.

The sportsmen of my time, with whom I was more intimately acquainted, were, Sir Francis Burdett, the Earls of Ducie and Kintore, Assheton Smith, William Codrington, and Villebois—save the first, all well-known masters of foxhounds. Of Mr. Ward I knew little personally, until the last year of his sporting career, although when a boy at school I had often hunted with his hounds on foot as well as on horseback, our tutor residing in the centre of his country.

Sir Francis was as great an enthusiast in fox-hunting as in politics; but I am inclined to think, after his experience of the mutability of the *Vox Populi,* he would have abandoned politics altogether, save from the instigation of his political friends; for I well recollect an observation he made to me, on receiving a packet of letters on this subject, when sitting with him one morning in his library. "Confound these fellows! I wish they would let me alone." That his opinions underwent a very great change during his latter days was well known.

At that early period of my life, knowing little, and caring less about the movements of the two different parties in the House of Commons, I can only speak of Sir Francis Burdett as a sportsman and a country gentleman, in both of which characters he stood very conspicuous; more prominently, perhaps, in the latter than the former, being a man of unbounded hospitality, and an excellent landlord. It was my good fortune, when a youth, to spend many happy days under his roof; and the recollection of his kindness, with that of one of the most gentle, affectionate, and tender-hearted, as well as highly talented of woman-kind, dear Lady Burdett, whom I loved as my own mother, will never be obliterated from my memory.

During the time the family resided at Ramsbury Manor, in Wiltshire, the dinner-table was well furnished with guests, the house being generally full of company, in addition to the neighbouring families, many of whom received a *carte blanche* for dinner invitations, to fill up as they pleased, the dining-table being of such ample dimensions as to admit unexpected guests. In this respect, and with regard to his guests, Sir Francis was a personal example of the liberal opinions he then held, and his house most truly called Liberty Hall. The breakfast-table stood prepared from eight o'clock in the morning until eleven a.m., to suit the convenience of early and late risers; after which, each person pursued his own course of action, without restrictions or interruptions from their host or hostess, in reading, riding, driving, hunting, shooting. or fishing, according to their several tastes and the season of the year, until the dinner hour, and as the clock struck six, the portly old butler made his *entrée* into the saloon, when those who were present immediately obeyed the summons, not a moment being allowed to tardy toilet makers or late comers; and this being an established rule, ensured the punctual attendance of those who cared for either fish or soup.

The mention of fish calls to my recollection a boyish adventure of my brother and self, to supply Lady Burdett's table, when the skill of the most expert fishermen had failed to raise a single trout from the stream. A large party was expected at dinner that evening, and our tutor, one of the most scientific anglers of his time, having promised her ladyship, the previous day, a splendid dish of trout for the occasion, commenced whipping the waters of the Kennet (which, running close by the house, formed a fine lake in its front) from an early hour in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon without success, for not one fish could he catch; the weather was too hot, the wind too still, the water too clear. He gave it up in despair, writing a letter to her ladyship expressive of his deep disappointment.

We were in the room when the letter arrived.

"What am I to do?" exclaimed Lady Burdett, "with this large party and without any fish! Mr. Meyrick has failed to take any, and depending on his skill, I did not send to the neighbouring town."

"Pray do not give yourself a moment's uneasiness on this account," I replied; "we will furnish your table with trout sufficient, even were your expected guests Catholics, and this their fast-day, to dine on fish alone."

"But how," she asked, "are you boys to effect this, when your master has so signally failed?"

"We will tell *you* when we return," was our reply, "on the condition that you do not impart the secret to him."

"That I readily promise," she said; "but you must make haste, or your fish will arrive too late for dinner."

Now whether inoculated with our host's well-known liberal ideas, or naturally of independent spirits, it matters not now to examine; it may suffice to state, that, as boys, we were disposed to entertain very liberal views, and to consider game and the finny tribe as *feræ naturæ*, and the legitimate property of the captor; in conformity with these opinions, having traps and nets, *sub rosâ,* to ensnare both game and fish. Within half an hour, therefore, of leaving her ladyship's presence, we were up to our necks in a back stream, which we knew to be tenanted by some fine trout. Our *modus operandi* was to place one net with a deep bag at the lower extremity of the water we intended drawing, and with a lighter one we commenced dragging down to it, poking under the banks as we proceeded with a long pole, and muddying the water as much as possible. The experiment resulted in a grand haul of some two dozen splendid trout, besides smaller fry, which being thrown back into the stream, we set off immediately with our captives, and having delivered them into the hands of our friend the butler, with directions to inform her ladyship, retired to our rooms to change our wet garments and dress for dinner. Our highly esteemed *magister artium*—for, irrespective of his knowledge in classics and mathematics, his talents were multifarious—being one of the numerous dinner-party this evening, lifted up his eyes in astonishment on beholding the splendid dish of trout placed on the table, casting an inquiring glance at Lady Burdett, which was returned by a rather mischievous smile, the meaning of which he at once comprehended, and the query, "Shall I send you some of our Kennet trout, Mr. Meyrick, which were caught this afternoon?"

"After my failure this morning," he answered, "I scarcely think myself entitled to accept your ladyship's offer; but may I ask if they were taken within a mile of this place, since I could not obtain a rise to any one of my flies this whole day?"

"They were caught within half a mile of this house," was the reply, "and in the same stream you have been fishing, by two young friends of mine and yours, whom you must confess to be very apt scholars under such scientific instruction."

"Their craft has certainly proved superior to my art," Mr. Meyrick good-humouredly remarked, "and I rejoice to find my young friends came so opportunely to your ladyship's assistance, although I believe those trout were not caught with a rod and line."

"It matters little how caught," interposed Lord E——, "since I never tasted any of finer flavour or in better condition; they are nearly as pink as salmon."

"Quite my opinion," added Sir Francis; "and I say, boys," in a low tone to us, "you may play at the same game to-morrow; but M. must not know the secret, or he will be talking of foul play, and spoiling legitimate sport."

It was not our intention to enlighten our worthy tutor on the means employed to capture the fish, as such knowledge would have materially interfered with our future progress in these unclassical pursuits; but the fact was, we were at that period two as arrant young poachers as could be found in the British Isles, plying our trade by day and night, as opportunity occurred.

Sir Francis was a bold and hard rider, going at everything which came in his line, and he gave long prices for his hunters. One, I remember, called Sampson, cost him five hundred guineas, a dark chestnut, with immense power for his height, and equal to carry almost any weight.

Of the late Assheton Smith it would be almost superfluous to write more, since so much has been already written by other pens besides my own. That he was a most fearless, determined performer across country all will admit who have ever ridden with him; but I have seen better horsemen, and in my humble opinion he got too many falls. His seat in the saddle was loose and careless, like that of many enthusiastic huntsmen, who are generally too intent on their hounds to pay much attention to their horse, or where he is going; but of his pluck there could be no doubt, and he was unquestionably one of the cleverest huntsmen of his time, combining the utmost quickness with the greatest patience.

I have often seen him with his own hounds, both in difficulties and when things went well, and I never saw any man handle his pack more scientifically than Assheton Smith. He was not afraid of his hounds, which so many huntsmen really are, although they will not confess it. He would trust them anywhere. They were not cooped up and huddled together by whippers-in round his horse's heels, but had free scope to trot along as they pleased when going from covert to covert, and the crack of the whip was seldom heard. In chase, Assheton Smith was cheery and cheerful, but at a sudden check he became instantly quiet, giving his hounds time to recover the scent before he interfered with them. With him it was an established maxim that a huntsman should *always be with his hounds,* and from this rule there are few instances on record of his ever departing. With them he would be, at any risk or any hazard, no matter what might intervene, but it was not for the purpose of catching hold of his hounds and hurrying them by hasty casts here and there. He was with them to watch their proceedings only, and help them *when necessary*, and *not before.* With such a purpose in view, it is not surprising to hear of the numerous perils encountered by Mr. Smith in the Leicestershire country, in almost every field of which he has been heard to say he had had a fall. There was also "method in his madness," as it may be called by some, for he generally contrived to fall on the right side of the fence, that is the *other* side, and clear of his horse.

He was one day riding in company with a friend of mine, the hounds running over a very stiff vale, in his Hampshire country, when a tremendous bullfincher presented itself right in their way, which my friend expressed his incapability of accomplishing, thinking no horse in the world could clear it, or even get through.

"Never mind," cried the Squire, "my place is on the other side, and there I must be at any rate, so good-bye;" saying which, he sent his horse at the place, with that determination and nerve for which he was so justly renowned, and under the influence of which, horses ridden by himself so seldom swerved at their fences, and on the right side he was landed very soon, but horse and rider—just where my friend expected to see them—on the ground. In short, he rode for a fall, and got one, but, none the worse for his skirmish, was up again, and quickly at the tail of his hounds.

On another occasion he was riding against a gentleman of the name of White, who happened to arrive first at the only spot in a *bullfinch* where there was a chance of clearing it. Mr. White made the attempt, and failed, sticking fast in the hedge.

"Get on!" cried Mr. Smith.

"I can't," said White.

"Ram the spurs into him," exclaimed Mr. Smith, "and pray get out of the way!"

"D——n it," replied the prisoner, "if you are in such a hurry, why don't you *charge* me!"

Mr. Smith did charge him, and sent him and his horse into the next field, when away they went again as if nothing had happened.

His fearless riding, and wonderful escapes from severe falls, without broken bones or any apparent injury, obtained for him, amongst the lower orders in his Hampshire country, the well-earned and justly-applied appellation of "The Hard Gentleman."

I have ridden with him through many a hard run, both with his own pack, and in other countries, and upon one occasion, when the hounds had slipped away from him at starting, with a burning scent, and he had to make up lee-way across a very stiffly enclosed vale, with very heavy fences, I saw him encounter three such falls in succession, within twenty minutes—his horse being completely blown by the railway pace he had been coming—as would have placed most men *hors de combat* for the remainder of the day. Hurt he was certainly, and most fearfully by the last, over a high five-barred gate into a turnpike-road; but his indomitable spirit carried him through to the end of the run and the death of the fox.

On another day Mr. Smith and myself were riding together side by side, in a sharp burst of thirty minutes, with my own hounds, when a thick plantation of young fir trees, about twelve feet high, obstructed our progress. There was no choice but to charge it at once, although the landing was not over agreeable, right in the midst of the branches of the prickly spruce; but after working our way through these, we had a stiff blackthorn hedge to encounter, with bank and double ditch, or a high five-barred gate, with thorns worked in between the top rails. For a moment both of us were puzzled, seeing no place for a horse to force himself through the fence, jumping it being quite out of the question.

"How are we to get out?" asked the Squire; "we are pounded here."

"I shall take the gate," was my reply.

"You cannot," said he; "there is no room to go at it."

Without another word, I sprang from my saddle, and finding the gate nailed up, got on to the top bar, elbowing the thorns back on either side, and having cleared a space sufficient to get over, I called my horse to follow me, which he immediately did, by vaulting over at a standing leap.

"Well done!" exclaimed the Squire, "you beat me there; my horse won't follow, so I must go lower down."

By performing this trick so cleverly, my horse soon carried his rider up to the hounds, which had met with a trifling check; but the Squire could not catch me again until we killed our fox. One of Mr. Smith's maxims was that a fox-hunter should never voluntarily leave his saddle, either to drive or lead his horse over a fence, and to this I agree as a general rule, but there are places into which a horse may jump, without the possibility of his jumping out of them with his rider on his back; and I maintain that a hunter ought to be trained to follow over a fence, by which time is gained—as in this instance—instead of lost by looking about for an easier exit.

To perform such feats cleverly and quickly, a horse must be attached to his master and obedient to his will; but Mr. Smith was too severe a rider for his hunters to become fond of him, and I well remember his celebrated horse, on hearing his voice in the stable, showing as much excitement in his loose box as a tiger does in his den.

I once fell in with the Squire, in the Collingbourne Woods, where he had been badgering about the whole day, until four o'clock in the afternoon; at which hour I happened to be riding along by the covert side, on my road to dine with my friend at Chute Lodge. Whilst jogging on quietly, somewhat in the mood of old Horace—

> "Nescio quid meditans nugarum, totus in illis,
> Accurrit quidam, notus mihi nomine tantum,"

forsooth Mr. Reynolds with his mouth wide open, and in a prodigious haste. My horse pricked up his ears at the sight, and I sat for a moment or two motionless on his back, until my new acquaintance had cleared the fence and gone over the next field. Then, guessing the cause of his haste, I gave two or three thrilling screams which echoed through the wood, and in a moment the shrill blast of a horn broke upon my ear; nearer and nearer it approached, and soon a horseman was heard crashing through the underwood, before emerging from which, no easy matter, he asked,

"Where is he gone?"

"Here, over this field."

"Why don't you holloa them on to his line? I can't get out."

"Because I know the consequences."

"Hang it! holloa, I say, and ride, for my horse is blown, and for my life I could not get another holloa out; go on with the hounds, for I am dead beat, and as hoarse as a crow, from hunting in these woods all day."

I did go on with the hounds, until they made a *detour* into the big woods again, where I took the first opportunity (knowing my friend would be waiting dinner for me) of giving the Squire the slip, leaving him alone in his glory. My heart smote me on riding away from a brother master in distress; but time was pressing, and even a fox-hunter should never keep ladies waiting.

Mr. Smith was blessed with the means of conducting his hunting establishment on the most enlarged and magnificent scale; but as in the hunting field, so in all the minor concerns of life, the master mind was ever conspicuous, whether in building a house or building a kennel, laying out gardens or erecting conservatories, the plans generally originated with himself. He not only possessed the money power of doing all these things, but the power of mind and intellect was not wanting to bring them to the most perfect conclusion. In all his undertakings, of whatever description, difficulties were no sooner started than overcome; in fact, the word *impossibility* would appear scarcely to have been known in his vocabulary.

I remember being in company with him and an architect when he was planning his new mansion at Tedworth, to make room for which, the old house was to be pulled down, with the exception of one favoured apartment, the dining-room, which, from old associations, he was resolved should not be interfered with. The architect endeavoured to convince him of the impossibility of preserving this room, without destroying the harmony in the proportions of the proposed new structure; but without avail, as the Squire was resolved not to give up the point; and taking the plans from the hands of his functionary, he quickly altered them, so as to effect the object he had in view, and handing them back to him, exclaimed,—"There, sir, is *my* plan of the building, which it is now your business to see executed,"—and turning on his heel, he walked away.

The design of the kennels and stables was also drawn by himself, and executed by his own carpenters and masons; and there are few if any structures of this kind in England which are more thoroughly adapted for the purposes intended, combining as they do every comfort and convenience. After his interview with the architect, I accompanied him to the grounds, which were to be laid out as a pleasure garden, above which stood a fine grove of trees, at that time occupied by a colony of rooks, which had there held their noisy station unmolested for many years. The Squire being of opinion that they might prove anything but agreeable neighbours to the ladies, for whom he was preparing this beautiful retreat, gave orders to his keeper to dislodge them without further notice.

It being then the season of the year when these birds were busily employed in repairing and making their nests, the keeper's platooning had as yet failed to produce the desired effect of ejectment, the birds still persisting—late at night, and very early in the morning—to ply their calling. The unhappy wight of plush and velveteen was at his post as usual under the trees, fusee in hand, when the Squire appeared on the spot. The wayward rooks might be seen flitting here and there at a respectful distance, and their hoarse cawing still heard as if in defiance of their enemies. By the walk and manner of my companion, I could plainly perceive that a storm was brewing, and about to burst over the head of his devoted servant. Calling him by name, the man quickly approached, with all due humility, hat in hand, before his imperious master.

Squire, loquitor. — "I thought I told you to dislodge those rooks immediately."

Servant.—"Yes, sir, I know you did, and I have been shooting at them, sir, day and night, almost, sir, ever since you gave the orders, sir; but they won't leave the place, sir."

Squire.—"Then *you* shall, sir, if in two days from this time there is another rook to be seen in these trees."

Servant.—"May I beg then the favour, sir, of your allowing me some more help, as I have already slept under the trees these three nights."

Squire.—"You may have half the village, if you want their assistance; but don't let me find both the *rooks* and *you* here when I come again."

Some six or seven years afterwards, when the rooks had long found another home, and all the arrangements then in contemplation had been carried out to their fullest extent, affording an incontestable proof of what wealth could accomplish when directed by the skill and taste of an English Gentleman, I was again on my road to Tidworth, with another famous Master of Fox-hounds, the well-known William Codrington, who at that time hunted the country adjoining Mr. Smith's, now called the South Wiltshire. Having dined and slept the previous night at the house then occupied by him as a hunting-box, near Warminster, we set out early the following morning, in the expectation of enjoying a great treat by looking over the kennels at Tedworth.

Upon our arrival, the master was absent, but soon expected home again, and in the meantime Dick Burton ably performed his part, as master of the ceremonies, by introducing us to the beauties of his harem. In company with this eminent professor of "The Noble Science,"—who in all matters relating to the birth, parentage, and education of fox-hounds, as well as their pedigrees, was considered a perfect oracle,—the hours passed rapidly away, and I was just urging upon my friend Codrington the necessity of our departure, when the Squire, having returned, and learnt who were in his kennels, made his appearance, greeting us, as usual, with great cordiality. A few of his particular favourites were again called out for a closer inspection, which occupied another hour, when dreading a dark ride home over the downs, neither of us being particularly well acquainted with the road, I was again obliged to interfere, and hint to my deeply engrossed friend the expediency of our commencing our homeward journey. To this the Squire put a decided *veto*, by insisting we should stay and dine with him. Codrington, being anxious to return home, made every excuse, affirming he was not fit company, in his present costume, to sit down with Dick Burton, much less in the society of ladies; and truly, from handling the hounds so long, and by their rubbing themselves against his white corduroy trowsers, not to mention a certain *odora canum vis*, imperceptibly perhaps, but most unmistakably imparted to the said garments, he certainly stood in need of a most complete change of dress, and a quart, at least, of the strongest *Eau de Cologne,* to neutralise the effects of his long-protracted visit to the kennels, before presuming to present himself in a lady's drawing-room.

To the same impeachment I must also plead equally guilty. We were neither of us fit for any company but our own; but the Squire, as usual, would not concede his point, and dine we must with him, but we were promised all the aid his house could afford, and at least half-an-hour to prepare our toilet. The look of resignation with which my poor old friend Codrington yielded to his fate was piteous to behold.

"Well," he exclaimed, "I suppose it must be done; but I would rather go without my dinner for a week than sit down with ladies in such a plight as this."

"Oh! nonsense," cried the Squire, "my man will soon set all that to rights, so come along."

Having reached the Hall, the Squire rang the bell, a footman appeared instantly, as if by magic, at the summons. The orders were, "Send Markham here directly."

Exit footman—*intrat* Markham.

"Show these two gentlemen to their rooms, and see they have everything they require in *ten minutes*—in short, a complete change of dress."

"Yes, sir," replied the obsequious valet, bowing low, and about to lead the way, when a loud laugh from Codrington arrested his further progress.

"That fellow fit *me!* why, bless my soul, all the slop shops in Portsmouth couldn't rig me out off-hand in that way."

"Oh, never mind, sir, we will see what can be done, if you will allow me to show you to your room,"—and my friend accordingly began to ascend the stairs, slowly ejaculating,—"Bless my soul! rig *me* out indeed! oh! oh! oh! bless my soul, what *will* they do next?"

I should observe, by the way, that my old friend Codrington was decidedly a descendant of the family of Anak, of colossal proportions, standing about six feet two inches high without his shoes, and weighing at that time about seventeen stone. Any one may therefore well imagine his look of contempt and thorough astonishment when it was hinted that he could by any process be *compressed* into anything belonging to the wardrobe of either master or man, especially the latter, who stood, in comparison to himself, in about the same ratio as a pug to a Newfoundland dog.

Having reached the apartment assigned to my friend, a consultation was held, what could be done at this short notice to make him at all presentable amongst ladies.

Mr. Markham soon made his appearance, with vestments of all sorts and sizes, collected from the various inmates of the establishment, from the tall footman downwards, but anything like a fit was totally out of the question. Markham looked discomfited, and my friend was pacing the apartment somewhat after the fashion of a caged elephant, muttering, as was his custom when things did not go well, "Bless my soul! what *will* they do next?" when the half-hour bell sounded.

"There," I said, "goes the dinner bell, and at this rate you will not be ready till supper time in the servants' hall."

"Well," exclaimed Codrington, "but what *can* I do?"

"Only one thing that I can see, which is to bundle in between the blankets, and send your white corduroys down to be well sponged over or washed out knee high."

"It can't be done in time," replied Codrington.

"Oh! yes, sir," said Markham, "it *shall* be done."

Surrender was made upon these terms, and with the assistance of divers fragrant perfumes, kindly supplied by one of the lady's maids, the *odora canum vis* was effectually subdued, when we made our appearance down stairs.

From these few little incidents a tolerable insight into the character of the Squire of Tedworth may be obtained. In matters of the highest import, down to those of the most trivial kind, the same unyielding spirit might be traced, contending with and generally trampling all difficulties opposed to him under foot. His rules and regulations as to the management of his household were also characteristic of the man, of which I may relate one instance.

Lady D—— was staying at Tedworth, who had a very fine lady's maid, as such in high families generally are, giving themselves more airs than their mistresses. This lady had been accustomed to associate only with the upper servants, breakfasting and dining in the housekeeper's room, and great was her indignation when told the rule of the house, that all the servants were obliged to take their meals together in the servants' hall. To this, at first, the haughty damsel would not submit, making complaint to her mistress of this harsh treatment, to which she had never before been subjected; but her mistress, not sorry to see her pride humbled, said, she could not, of course, interfere with Mr. Smith's domestic arrangements. She then applied to the housekeeper to allow her to take her meals in her own room, as she could not sit down at the same table with "those low people."

"Then you must starve," was the housekeeper's reply; "for I should lose my situation immediately if I dared infringe on Mr. Smith's orders."

I could relate many more stories and anecdotes of the late Assheton Smith, as *told to me*, which have probably been told to hundreds of others, but I have deemed it best to confine myself chiefly to those which have come under my own observation. I will, however, give one more of private life.

At one time, Mrs. Smith being in rather a delicate state of health, a change to a warmer climate, during the winter months, was suggested by their medical adviser, to which the Squire, from his well-known avocations, was rather averse; but he immediately replied, "As we cannot well go to Madeira, Madeira must come to *us!*"

This led to the construction of a most magnificent conservatory, or winter garden, in which the choicest plants and exotics were placed, and which was connected with the house by a long covered walk, one side being entirely of glass, extending again through the conservatory to the stables.

CHAPTER V.

Something about two Tom Smiths.—The Earl of Kintore.—A Note from North Britain.—Difficulties in the way of obtaining a good Pack of Fox-hounds.—Sad true words.—Lord Ducie in the Hunting Field.—A Generous Competitor.—A cart-load of Geraniums.—Faithful and True.—Root-growing the Farmer's last resource.—Old Codrington, the Fox-hound Genealogist.—Hospitalities at Spye Park.—Tom Moore and Bowles.—Frederick Villebois.—Tench *versus* Trout.—Sir Wheeler Cuffe.—The Secret of Rejuvenescence.—Rough Words from a Rough Rider.—Summut with a Long Tail.—The Author placed in a Novel Position.—Peculiarities of the Craven Country.

It has been said by a clever writer on fox-hunting, that of all the Smiths (and their name is legion) there has been only *one* Tom Smith. I have met with *two* in my sporting career, and scarcely know to which of the two the palm of merit should be awarded in preference to the other.

Tom Smith, of Leicestershire renown, could kill his fox handsomely *with* a good pack of hounds. The other Tom Smith, of Hambledon and Craven notoriety, could kill his fox *without* a good pack—I was going to say, *without any hounds at all;* that is, I have seen him, when the scent failed, doing the work hounds ought to have done, through his extraordinary knowledge of the running and wily movements of the animal he was pursuing.

As a horseman and rider to hounds, I always considered the Craven Tom Smith, although a heavier man, quite equal to his namesake, and in this opinion I am not singular. Had the former possessed the money power of the latter—for money makes the mare to go—*i. e.* you can scarcely, except by accident, obtain a good weight-carrying hunter under a sum very heavy to a man of moderate fortune—there is little doubt he would have obtained equal celebrity; being a man of great natural abilities, as well as a first-rate sportsman. No Master could have taken a country under greater disadvantages than the present Tom Smith when entering on his arduous duties with the Pytcheley. He commenced cub-hunting with a scratch pack of hounds—if my recollection serves me—at the end of October, when other packs had finished this preliminary work, succeeding a nobleman whose establishment had been conducted in such style as to render comparisons with his predecessor in office most disagreeable. He was totally unacquainted with the country, and not in a position to purchase the stamp of horse requisite for Northamptonshire. Yet with these and many other difficulties, he contrived to show more sport than most huntsmen could have done under such untoward circumstances.

The other cotemporary gentlemen huntsmen with whom I had the pleasure of being more intimately acquainted were the Earls of Kintore and Ducie, and, though last, not least, William Codrington—all three hunting counties adjoining my own.

Lord Kintore was a bold, dashing rider and most enthusiastic fox-hunter — full of fun and spirits, kind-hearted, generous, and convivial in private life; a clever scholar and most entertaining companion. He had shown an early disposition for what became afterwards his favourite and almost only amusement; and although the possessor of first-rate abilities, his chief pleasure was derived from a country life. Of the many MSS. in my possession, the following may not prove wholly uninteresting to my readers, as illustrative of his humorous style of composition :—

"Gàsk Kennel, Turriff, N. B., Febry ye 24.

"MY DEAR H——,

"Many thanks for ye 'Stave,' which I rec^{d} at *Keith Hall*, where I went to keep my Xmas, ye 20th of last month, 18 miles distant from this kennel, ye *centre* of my country: you'll find this last season, or else I am greatly mistaken, that a few have had uncommon sport, but that ye majority with Ego *I* have had but very middling, owing entirely to a total want of ye *sine quâ non* and untoward Boreas unhunting like weather—when I left 'that ere Vale,' between Farringdon and Lydiard woods, I bid adieu to real fox-hunting, but this Johny Groat's House Country, as it is, w^{d} delight old Codrington cum *multis* aliis of my acquaintance. When I got down *the Man* whose Ancester Johny Cope ran away from Preston Kirk there, he exclaimed to me in ye heart of it one Summer day, How could you move *from* home when you had a country LIKE *this*, so handy to y^{r} use? I replied, ye Lack and ye love of Society. I regretted very much, H——, you had not time to have run down by the Mail, and have taken a look at my *Tykes*, I^{d} have shown you as perfect, for her inches, a Bitch by old Valiant, as ever stood on ye flags of a kennel. I understand Moreton has had a good season and a capital run, 14 days ago from Down Ampney, and had also a proper breeze with old Jack ——, a horrible wild one for the time he's been at it, and ought to know better in *every way.* Now I am going to ask a favour of you, and between you, old Codrington and Will Long you'll surely make it out to me, viz. to procure me a good Stallion Hound, not one whose powder is all gone, but one vot w^{d} hunt well up to next Xmas and be ready for his work after it. I have such a distance to send to any good dog. For instance, this is the 2^{d} time this Bitch Valarous, I allude to, has been sent to ye Duke of Bucleugh's Kennel, NEARER 600 miles the two journies than 500, and she has miss'd this year. You'l, therefore, immediately be Awake to ye very great disadvantage I labour under in this respect, and will for a fellow truly fond of ye fun, do yr best for *me.* You know that

'"Ye large strong bony dog,
One when on scent, who firmly speaks, I seek;
Whose powerful frame leaves far behind
Ye small pygmean squeaking kind.'

"*Him I admire;* but from ye nature of ye country I hunt, and the impervious gorse coverts they have to draw, my experience tells me that in *medio* tutissimus ; and for that very reason, viz. : The coverts, he meuses better, and is nearer to his fox.

"But always breed from a larger sort than that which you mean to keep. If you won't think me very conceited, and very intolerable, I'll send *you*, old Codrington, and Will Long, a list of my *'cry-o-dogs,'* as they say in Yorkshire. Bucleugh has got a capital pack of hounds, ye first out of all sight this side of Tweed, and well they now may be, having been a pack for nearly forty years, although not in his possession, I suppose, above six. The Fifeshire, capital for their numbers, in their work, but quite a different animal. Joe Grant, no bad judge, who was twelve years *under Nicholls*, will tell you that ye Duke of *Buckle-my-Shoes* are now as sightly, and as good, as he ever saw a pack of hounds. The other packs, with my own, this side of Tweed, *Lala*, you'l never get perfection as long as you are obliged to breed from IMperfection. I don't *allude* to WORK, for there Jack Pudding Ipse would be to blame ; but I allude to imperfection, and want of symmetry, &c., in shape, and you are well aware Nicolls were BUT, at best, all Beaufort Drafts—so that you were perfectly right (altho a good sum) to give old Johny ye 2,000 for ye perfect ones, altho, confound him, he did YOU out of some you ought to have had; and what is still more, He 'larnt' his pupil, old Sam, *ye trick*. Attend to my request; come and see me when next you come to Scotland, and with my very respectful Compts. to Mrs. H.,

"Believe me, very truly, yrs.,

"KINTORE.

"When you have succeeded in my request, if you'll but send Him by the Waggon to the care of a '*cidevant*' old Sampson Hanbury, Spital Fields, London, with a note to him to forward him by the Steamer *for me*, I'll soon have him in my kennel. Excuse this liberty, and double postage. Had I been alive at THE Union, I'd have holloa'd out for *Fair Play*. There are only 16 of US, and I have always lived TOO much in ye kennel to give myself any BOTHER about it—"

It will be gathered from the above that Lord Kintore possessed a thorough knowledge of hounds and hunting, and the stamp of hound adapted for general use; and he was fully aware of the difficulties he had to meet in breeding a clever pack, both in appearance and work. Nicol's hounds, which he purchased, were, as he truly observes, Beaufort drafts only, for Mr. Nicol bred very few young hounds himself, generally depending on the

Badminton kennels for his entry every season; and old Philip Payne, with his successor in office, Will Long, were too good judges to part with hounds likely to suit themselves, unless upon some extraordinary occasions, when they might have more clever young hounds come home from their walks than they could put forward.

Lord Kintore knew that he could never expect weeds—*i. e.*, small hounds, without power—although ever so good in the field, to produce anything worthy of observation in the kennel, very appropriately remarking that you could "not obtain perfection from imperfection."

To his hospitality whilst residing at Wadley House, near Farringdon, there are, no doubt, many still living who can bear testimony, and who probably retain a vivid recollection of the *Fox's head*, an acquaintance with the contents of which generally afforded more than satisfaction to the most enthusiastic fox-hunter. After leaving England for his ancestral hall in Scotland, we had few opportunities of meeting; and in the last visit he paid me, I remember, after inspecting the kennels, he placed his hand on my shoulder, and said—"My dear H., we shall never meet again in this world—my days are numbered."

His forebodings, alas! proved too true—I saw him indeed no more! but to this day I lament the untimely death of one who to me was ever a kind-hearted, true friend and most cheerful companion.

Of Lord Ducie,—then the Honourable Henry Moreton,—who succeeded Lord Kintore in part of his country, I can speak from experience as an excellent judge of hounds and hunting, and thoroughly acquainted with those points—either in fox-hound, horse, or cattle kind—essential to the perfection of animal structure. I know no huntsman of his time more quick (through his glass, being very shortsighted) to detect, almost at a glance, any imperfections of shape; and in the field no man knew better what the fox-hound ought to do. He was a quiet, steady, though resolute rider, a superior horseman, and first-rate huntsman; patient with his hounds in difficulties, and quick with them in chase, when things went well. That he was sometimes hasty with those who interrupted his sport, I am free to admit, as all huntsmen of sanguine temperament are; and few, indeed, can endure this trial without exhibiting some ebullition of temper; but I know no man who felt more annoyed afterwards at being betrayed into the expression of severe reprimands to those who had incurred his displeasure than the late Lord Ducie, and in private life none could be more estimable. He was an excellent husband, kind father, and a true and staunch friend. Of noble and generous feelings, and liberal in its true acceptation.

I could adduce many instances of his expansive generosity, but will select one or two only, as we are treating of hunting matters connected therewith, characteristic of his general disposition. With other Masters I attended a sale of foxhounds, when the pack was to be first put up in one lot, and if not thus sold, then to be disposed of in smaller lots. Lord Ducie was present, intending to purchase the whole. There was also another Master, sadly in want of hounds to begin hunting a country he had just taken. This gentleman felt greatly disappointed when hearing he was to encounter such a formidable competitor as Lord Ducie, knowing, from his lack of means, it was useless for him to bid against him; and being slightly acquainted with Lord Ducie, he could not forbear telling him the circumstances under which he was placed, and the disappointment he felt at having undertaken so long a journey for nothing—competition with him being out of the question, and therefore that he should at once return home.

"Stay," said Ducie, "until after the sale, since, if I become the purchaser of the pack, I may be able to assist you a little."

Lord Ducie was the purchaser, and taking this gentleman into the kennel after the sale, he drew out five couples for himself, and turning to his brother Master, said—"All the other hounds are yours, if you will do me the favour to accept them."

The surprise of the other at this generous offer may be imagined; but not willing to accept it, he was endeavouring to make some more equitable arrangement, when Lord Ducie replied, "You must permit me to help a brother Master in a difficult position in my own way, or I shall send off the whole pack to my kennel." I need scarcely add that, there being no alternative, Lord Ducie enjoyed the gratification of having his own way.

Some few years after this occurrence, my own pack was visited by that most fatal malady—madness—through which I lost several couples of most valuable hounds; when Lord Ducie, hearing of my disaster, came over to see me, and on his return home two days after, he despatched his whipper-in with *fourteen couples* to my kennels, and this short note:—

"My dear H.,

"As your pack will be short in numbers, I have sent Jack with a few hounds I have lately purchased, untried by me, which I hope may prove of some little service to you.

"Yours very truly,

"Ducie.

"P.S.—I selected those most likely to suit you as to height."

On another occasion his generosity was tested in rather a ludicrous manner. He was staying with me (during his father's lifetime) for a few days, when dining with us one evening at a neighbour's house, the lady having seen some beautiful geraniums presented by him to my wife, asked him if he could spare her a few plants from his magnificent collection.

"Oh, yes," was the ready reply, "a waggon-load if you like," little suspecting that he would be taken literally at his word. Such, however, was the case; for happening to be on a visit at Woodchester Park that same summer, we were walking together, when the Earl, seeing a waggon drawn by three horses coming down the drive, exclaimed, "Whose waggon can that be, Henry, coming towards the house?"

"We will see," was the reply; when approaching it, the driver stopped his horses, and doffing his hat, with a pull at his forelock, said—

"Mrs. B.'s compliments, my lord, and has sent for the geraniums."

"What does the man mean?" asked the Earl, in surprise.

"Hoh! hoh!" shouted Moreton, unable to control a loud fit of laughter, "by Jove! the little woman has taken me at my word, and she shall have them, too."

"Nonsense!" I said, "this is too bad; I really gave Mrs. B. credit for more common sense, if not more moderation."

Notwithstanding my remonstrances, however (and I must confess to feeling very annoyed at the inconsiderate conduct of my pretty neighbour), the waggon was sent back loaded with geraniums and hot-house plants.

When thus generously disposed to common acquaintances, it was a natural sequence that Lord Ducie should be no less liberal and staunch to his friends; and that such was the case, I could adduce many proofs. I remember his coming to my house one afternoon rather late, and asking if I could give him a bed for the night, as he was on his road to see a friend.

"Certainly," was my reply; "and I dare say we can give you some dinner also, as we generally dine at seven o'clock in the summer months."

When we were sitting together after dinner he said, "You will not be offended if I leave you very early to-morrow morning?"

"Not offended," I answered, "although not very well pleased at your paying us so short a visit."

"Well," he continued, "there is a cause for it, and I will tell you thus much: a friend of mine, whom you know, R——, has got himself into trouble, of which I heard only this morning, and therefore I am desirous to see if I can assist him, and that without delay."

I had also good reason to know him as a friend indeed, when left almost single-handed to contend against fearful odds, with the highest influences and power combined, to overthrow me in a hunting dispute, Lord Ducie stood resolutely forward to support me, and defeated my opponents.

After retiring from the hunting-field, Lord Ducie devoted a great part of his time to agricultural pursuits, and became not less celebrated as a breeder of short-horns, than he had been previously as a breeder of fox-hounds, which was sufficiently manifested by the high prices obtained for his stock of cattle after his lamented death. His model farm, near Tortworth, in Gloucestershire, gave evidence of what could be effected by science and judgment combined, setting an example to farmers that root-growing ought to be the precursor to all cereal crops; and his system has since been very generally adopted by all who have the sense to appreciate the proper cultivation of the soil.

Although by first-rate abilities fully qualified to shine as a statesman, and *possessing*, not *professing* merely, most liberal and philanthropic views, Lord Ducie wisely preferred the occupations of a country life, where he rendered himself most useful in his generation, to taking a very active part in almost endless political warfare.

> "Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
> As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
> The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
> Another still, and still another spreads;
> Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace;
> His country next; and next all human race;
> Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
> Take ev'ry creature in, of ev'ry kind.
> Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
> And Heaven beholds its image in his breast."

William (more generally known as old) Codrington, although, poor fellow, he never arrived at the age of man, was the eldest of four brother fox-hunters, John, Robert, and Oliver, all first-rate sportsmen, who took an interest in the working of hounds. He commenced his career as Master of fox-hounds in the old Berkshire country, within hearing of the Christchurch bells of Oxford; and when reading for my degree I remember joining his hounds at Tubney Wood. After hunting this country some few years, he returned to his native county, and took the management of that now called the South Wilts Hunt, residing near Warminster, where I had the pleasure of becoming more intimately acquainted with him.

Codrington was not unaptly considered the Meynel of his age in all pertaining to the management of hounds, both in the kennel and the field; and as a huntsman, although riding hard upon eighteen stone, he contrived for many seasons to show first-rate sport. But his knowledge of fox-hound genealogy was something marvellous. He not only knew the best and most ancient blood then extant, but could trace back the pedigrees of a favourite sort of fox-hound for a century at least; in short, his memory served as a stud-book, to which one could always refer for correct information.

His pack was, as I have before remarked, composed chiefly of the Beaufort blood, to which he was very partial; although in later years he bred many hounds from my kennel, and when I had any of smaller size to suit his standard, I generally sent them to him. This favour he often returned, by picking up here and there in his travels during the summer a big young hound or two, too large for other packs; and one particularly I remember he brought home for me sixty miles in a post-chaise. This act alone is characteristic of the feelings by which he was actuated towards his friends; for a more kind, warm-hearted man never existed than Will Codrington. In the field he had a most able assistant in Jem Treadwell, who, when his master parted with his hounds, lived as huntsman for many years to Mr. Farquarson, until he also resigned his post as Master of the Dorsetshire Hunt.

We often met at the hospitable board of his brother-in-law, John Starkey, of Spye Park, an excellent sportsman, as well as most entertaining host, with an almost inexhaustible fund of anecdotes derived from John Ward, with whom he had lived on very intimate terms whilst hunting in the Craven country, for several seasons, previously to residing at Spye Park. This was my half-way house, whenever our appointments were made for that district; a bed was always provided for me, and a most hearty welcome; and when calling to mind the genuine hospitality of fox-hunters in those times, it seems that with them has passed away also that social intercourse, unfettered and unrestricted by the formalities of the present age, by which country gentlemen and fox-hunters of the old school were so particularly distinguished.

Of Dr. Starkey also, my friend's father, I have every reason to speak in the highest terms, as equally hospitable, clever, and entertaining; and at his house I had first the pleasure of meeting Tom Moore, the poet, who resided in the neighbourhood. Not far distant, at Bremhill, resided also another eccentric poet, Bowles, of whose absence of mind and vagaries of imagination many stories were told. His chief mode of locomotion being on horseback, he was met one day by a friend, walking leisurely along the road, book in hand, with the reins of his bridle hanging on his arm, and the head-piece with the bit trailing on the ground behind him.

"Why, Bowles," exclaimed his friend, "what has become of your horse?"

"Behind me," was his reply, without taking the trouble to look back.

"Then he is an uncommon long way behind, Bowles, for I can see a mile of road, but no horse."

On this occasion, during one of his absent fits, whilst stopping and taking notes as he proceeded by the way-side, the chin-stay being loose, the horse had disengaged the bridle from his head without his master being aware of his movements. The limits, however, to which I am prescribed in this short work, warn me not to enter on fresh ground, since even of the Masters of Hounds whom I have mentioned there is only sufficient space to admit of my taking a cursory notice. With all his eccentricities and way-side wanderings, nevertheless Bowles took good care to avoid meeting the fox-hounds, although we were continually running through his parish.

Moore was the antithesis to Bowles—joining in all our amusements—save fox-hunting—balls, archery-meetings, and dinner parties, and, I need scarcely add, was a most lively, cheerful, and agreeable companion.

Mr. Frederick Villebois, brother to the celebrated Master of the H. H., will long be remembered in the Craven country for his liberal management of that hunt; and although not equal to cope with his great predecessor in joviality, joke, and jest, he was not found wanting in hospitality and genuine social feelings; but from his reserved manners and rather stiff deportment his true character was not known except to those of his more intimate acquaintance, by whom he was most highly esteemed for generosity of disposition and other estimable qualities.

At Benham Park, with Lord Ducie, Tommy Moreland, and other sporting friends, I have spent many most cheerful, pleasant evenings; and I remember, after having, in the company of the two former, paid a visit of inspection to Sir John Cope's kennel at Bramshill—sitting down one summer evening to dinner, with one of the finest trout on the table I ever saw, taken out of the Kennet, weighing over eight pounds.

"Well, Wildboy" (as he used to call him), exclaimed Lord Ducie, "that is a splendid fish indeed, I cannot beat you at that game—but if you will come and dine with me next week, I think I can produce a tench which shall equal, if not surpass, your trout in weight."

The invitation including all present, we dined at Woodchester Park accordingly; and a brace of tench were placed on the table, one over, and the other a few ounces short of the same weight.

One of our party, on that occasion, was Sir Wheeler Cuffe, a very staunch old fox-hunter, who had been entered at Melton under the father of the chase, Mr. Meynel, and had hunted there also with Lord Sefton and Tom Smith. Sir Wheeler, for his age, was one of the most active and vigorous men I ever remember, still a very hard rider; and when one day remarking on his extraordinary youthfulness of look and manner—for he generally paid me a visit every hunting season—his reply struck me most forcibly—"I have outlived my generation, and being consequently obliged to associate with much younger men than myself, I have tried to keep up with them, and that effort has prevented me feeling my age. Depend upon it, my young friend," he continued, "men yield too soon to increasing years; and the very fact of their *believing themselves* getting old and infirm *makes* them so."

There is a great deal of sense and pith in this remark. After partaking of his tench, and other good fare prepared for us that evening, Lord Ducie asked, "What say you, Sir Wheeler, to killing a cub to-morrow morning? There is a good litter not far off; but as the weather is hot, we must be moving very early."

"With all my heart," Sir Wheeler replied; "any hour will suit me."

"Well, then," said Lord Ducie, "you shall be called at three; we can then breakfast, and be in our saddles by four."

I could perceive this getting up in the middle of the night did not quite tally with Sir Wheeler's humour; but no objection being raised, we were up and dressing by candle-light the next morning, and reached the covert side by dawn of day—a thick plantation on the side of a hill, where Lord Ducie and his pack were quickly at work, stirring up the cubs; Sir Wheeler and myself taking up our station in an old truckway above it, at some distance from each other, so that we might view any fox that crossed our path.

The foxes showing great disinclination to shift their quarters, my Lord and his pack soon found it pretty hot work, as the sun had now risen full against the hill-side; but after being knocked about for some considerable time, one fox the hounds were hunting poked his nose out at top, when, unfortunately catching sight of Sir Wheeler's nose, he popped his own back again into covert. Up came the hounds all alive, with their huntsman in close attendance, and swinging over the road, were of course at fault.

"Where's he gone?" screamed the Master, peppery hot.

"Headed back into covert," replied Sir Wheeler.

"So I thought," was the rejoinder, "at seeing such a confounded old fool stuck up in the middle of the road!"

Sir Wheeler "*demittit auriculas, ut iniquæ mentis asellus cùm gravius dorso subiit onus,*" i. e., Anglice, he winced a good deal on being thus assailed, and jogging down to where I was sitting on horseback under a tree, expressed his grievance very indignantly, declaring his intention of returning home directly.

"Pooh, nonsense!" I said, "you must make allowances for a man's warmth of temper such a hot piping morning as this."

"Would you like to be called a confounded old fool?" asked the still chafing baronet.

"Perhaps not," was my reply; "but I shall be called a young one pretty soon, if we sit talking here together, and head the fox again; so you take my position under the tree, where there is shade, and a little breeze to cool your excitement, whilst I go lower down."

I had not moved long to my new place of observation before I viewed the fox stealing stealthily over the road, and jumping the fence, he went away across the next field; some five minutes after, the hounds feathered out into the road a few yards above the line of the fox, and Lord Ducie with them.

"Seen the fox, Squire?" (the name by which he generally called me) he asked very quickly.

"Well, Master," I replied, "I see'd summit with a long tail acrossing the road lower down."

"Then why didn't you holloa?"

"I warn't quite sure, Master"—touching my hat—"whether it were a *cur* dog or a cock pheasant."

"Hang your nonsense, Squire—where is he gone?"

"All right now, Master—Vagabond hits him off—Yoi, over they go!" and away he went over a few fields into another dingle, where the fox got to ground.

"Confound you! Squire," said Ducie, "if you had halloa'd us out at first, we should have caught him before he reached his earth; what ails you this morning?"

"That stewed tench of yours last night has bothered my vision not a little, and I feared making a mistake, lest I might catch *toco*, like Sir Wheeler."

"Well, well," he replied, "I was deucedly annoyed at his being headed back again into that smoking-hot plantation, where the sun was full in my face, without a breath of air; but I hope he is too good a fox-hunter to take offence at my hasty expression;—I will make him every apology presently—but now—what's to be done with this fox?"

"Have him out by all manner of means;—I'm good for an hour's work with pick-axe and shovel, it will clear the mist from my eyesight."

"No, no, Squire, it won't do—the place is too strong—we will go and find another the other side of the hill, to put Sir Wheeler in good humour, with a gallop."

After another hour with a fresh fox and a freshening breeze—the *hot breeze* of the morning was entirely forgotten—we all returned home together in good spirits and good fellowship as before.

It was, I think, that same autumn, before regular hunting commenced, that in returning from London I took Benham in my road, intending to stay only one night there; when after dinner, Villebois, objecting to my flying visit, begged me to remain another day. On my demurring to his proposition, he said, "We have been rather unlucky lately in handling our foxes, and I wish you would go out with us to-morrow, and help to kill one."

"Well," I said, "if such is your wish, and you think I can assist you, I will remain with pleasure, although I had intended hunting with my own hounds the day after."

"I am quite in earnest," was his reply, "and will mount you on the fastest hunter I have in the stable."

These preliminaries being settled, I was installed the next morning in my novel situation of half huntsman, half whipper-in, with *carte blanche* from the Master to act in either capacity, as opportunity offered; and the result of our day's sport was that a brace of foxes' heads were carried back to the kennel; and a pretty smart bespattering of abuse on my head from some of the gents out, for knocking over two of these dodging brutes in one day.

Some people—like children—are never satisfied. Complaints had been previously made to Villebois that the foxes were not killed, and when killed they grumbled because they were killed. The fact was, I believe, they were annoyed at a stranger stepping in to help to finish them. Now, as I went out for the express purpose of blooding the hounds — having my instructions from the Master what to do — I waited my opportunity, and when that arrived stepped in to settle the business.

Our first fox had every chance to break, if he would, in a certain direction; for, after knocking him about a large covert until the hounds were sick of it, we got him into another smaller one adjoining, where I barred him back from the big wood, by placing Villebois and others between them; and as he turned sulky, and would not break when the coast was left clear for him, he soon paid the penalty.

Having eaten him, we went to find another, a couple of miles distant, and as this fox crossed the drive before me, I saw he was not a fresh one, and after a turn or two round the covert, I got at him with ten couples of hounds, in the high wood, by the side of which a drive ran, parallel to the outside, and by galloping and cheering them down this drive, as fast as I could gallop, fox-hounds and myself all came out in view at the bottom, and away we went, racing across a few fields, with only one man besides myself near them, and back into the same coppice where we killed our first; and here No. 2 shared the fate of his companion, being blown up by the pace.

The Craven country I had known previously, by experience, to hold a poor scent, unless in very wet weather, and from the continuity of woodlands, with short running foxes, requires an active, energetic huntsman to show sport. Hounds also become slack from their feet being cut and bruised by the flints, which prevent them carrying a head, as in more favoured districts. Villebois, although not equal to hunt hounds, even had he been so inclined, was a good sportsman, entering *con amore* into the business, and had become the master of a very clever pack, when he was cut off, apparently strong in bodily power, by an attack of influenza.

CHAPTER VI.

A Short Homily by the Country Mouse.—Why Towns must be Tenanted, and why Parks should be Planted.—Things to be Learned in the Hunting Field.—Social and Political Aspects of Horses and Hounds.

"The rural wilds
Invite; the mountains call you, and the vales:
The streams, the woods, and each ambrosial breeze
That fans the ever-undulating sky;
A kindly sky! whose fostering pow'r regales
Man, beast, and all the vegetable reign."

HOWEVER alluring or fascinating the recreations and amusements of a town life may appear, there is a subtle poison in the cup of these enjoyments, which those who drink deeply of them soon would discover to their cost, did not the rules of fashion put some check to their enjoyment. The opera, the theatre, the ball-room, with their reeking atmosphere of over-crowded humanity, and heat more oppressive and debilitating than that of Calcutta—what are these in comparison with the exhilarating pastimes, and health-giving exercises of a country life, under the fresh and pure breath of Heaven? How soon, by the influence of the former, do the rosy hues on beauty's cheek fade away, and give place to the sickly shade which belongs to the votaries of dissipation.

> "Ye who amid this feverish world would wear
> A body free of pain, of cares, a mind,
> Fly the rank city, shun its turbid air."

Yet there are thousands, millions of human beings, from earliest infancy to decrepit old age, doomed to breathe this chaos of eternal smoke and volatile corruption; and so powerful are the effects of habit, so accommodating is nature to the different circumstances and situations in which mankind may be placed, that town-born children thrive and fatten on the tainted atmosphere, miscalled air, although the ruddy bloom of health is wanting, and that vigour of constitution in after-years, so conspicuous in the fresh cheeks and robust frame of the countryman.

But, to speak of the higher and middle orders of society, who, by their vocations or duties, are obliged to spend a large portion of their time in the city, we neither envy nor grudge them their necessary relaxation from toil and care, in the grand *réunions,* fashionable assemblies, and other entertainments. Neither would I forbid my fair young countrywomen the delightful enjoyment of the opera (barring the ballet, which is an abomination, or ought to be, to every unsophisticated girl), *soirées dansantes,* theatrical exhibitions, or such like reliefs from *ennui.* I would only suggest the reflection which their own mirrors must retain, that their complexions are not improved by too frequent indulgence in these midnight amusements, or their strength of mind and body much invigorated; and, as to a dusty ride or drive in the Park, by way of a refresher, after a night's fevered dissipation in hot, crowded rooms, what are they when put in competition with a canter over the fresh breezy downs, or even a stroll on foot through the green shady lanes of the country?

The world, however, is wide enough for us all, and our different tastes and diversities of opinion afford the best reason why we should each seek our own enjoyment of life in the mode most suitable to our own peculiar temperament or disposition. The animal *rationale*—man—being of the social or gregarious order, cities and towns, since the foundation of Babel or Babylon by the son of Cush, have continued the favourite resort of the great bulk of the people, where arts and sciences flourish, and the affairs of nations are generally transacted; and although I would not detract from the utility of these vast hives of human industry, ingenuity, and knowledge, yet must I maintain that the amusements of the gay metropolis have a tendency to shorten, whereas those of the country conduce to lengthen the span of man's existence.

And is there not yet another argument? Oh! ye who have the power of residing in the country, and of assisting those in a humbler position than yourselves, what nobler employment can you find than visiting the peasant's hut, and cheering, by the smiles of benevolence, the humble abode of honest industry? These poor fellows, honoured now and then by an illustrious and friendly visitor, who goes to them *as a visitor*, and not as a moralist or relieving officer, feel an importance thus conferred upon them which calls for new decorum on their part, gives them a new character to maintain, awakens a spirit of propriety and cleanliness, a little personal and domestic vanity, which, within certain limits, is the first step towards comfort, civilization, and morality.

The laying out of grounds for the people, into which, as a great reservoir, pour the wretched inhabitants of those by-streets and alleys (with which, to the disgrace of humanity, all large towns abound), to enjoy, for a few hours, air and exercise, one day, at least, out of the seven, is not only a step in the right direction, but one of imperative necessity, as brick and mortar extend around them in every direction. And what would London be without its Parks and Gardens, even to the rich, who have the means of locomotion? Of how much more vital importance, then, are such places to the poor!

To return to the amusements of town life, and place them in juxtaposition with those of the country, it will, I think, be admitted that from the former spring debility and effeminacy, whilst from the latter strength and health are derived.

In a national point of view, therefore, we may advocate the cause of field sports, and all manly exercises and recreations, as conducive to the welfare and exalting the character of every nation. Yes, I repeat deliberately, exalting the character of a nation, by calling into exercise those mental and physical qualities which prepare men for great and hazardous exploits. The boy who has been accustomed to bear the fatigues and brave the dangers of the hunting field—to disregard cold—and submit patiently to those privations which attend a sportsman's life, will be, when a man, the first to charge the ranks of the enemy, and the fittest to endure the hardships of a campaign. At the same time, we must not be understood to mean that hunting and shooting are to be the sole business of a man's life; we speak of them only as *recreative* pastimes, when the bow is to be unstrung from other necessary occupations. We speak of field sports and country amusements as spirit-stirring, healthful, cheerful diversions, tending to invigorate the mind and body, in opposition to those of the city, which lead to debility, luxury, sensuality, and ruin of constitution.

Notwithstanding the childish prating of the Cobden school of polititians about peace—peace, when there is no peace—the safeguard of every nation is the hardihood and bravery of its people, and the safest method to maintain peace is ever to be prepared for war. The history of the world teaches us that, when we shall cease to be warlike, we shall cease also to be independent. Giving our backs to the smiters, forgiveness of injuries, patience, and submission to insults and abuse, are virtues which ought to be practised by members of a Christian community towards each other; but, until the whole world binds itself by treaty to observe and obey these laws of God, the doctrine of "peace at any price," as applicable to or practicable by nations, is a fallacy and delusion.

"A nation of shop-keepers" may sound very harmonious to mercantile ears, but were this consummation, so ardently desired by cotton-spinners and manufacturers, attained—were England to become the workshop of the whole globe—the pursuits of agriculture abandoned, and the muscles and fibres of her hardy peasantry devoted to loom and workshop only, her Cobdenite rulers would then indeed have to plead (like the Roman Senators at the decline of their Empire) for "peace at any price," and purchase a hollow truce on any terms from an insulting enemy. The spectacle of Roman Senators in their robes might have been an imposing one to barbarians; but I doubt of any other effect being produced by a motley group of members of the House of Commons (even with the Speaker at their head, in his full-bottomed wig), on the conquerors, but ridicule and contempt. When country sports, and pastimes also, shall be discontinued and discountenanced, and the higher and middle classes driven to the mighty Babylon of our time for debasing amusements, London will prove to Englishmen what Capua did to Hannibal and his once hardy and victorious soldiers.

I have yet another answer, and in turn I must be querist. "What is the use of horse-racing? To fill some people's pockets, and empty others!" No, that is the abuse, not the legitimate use of the thing. The primary object of horse-racing is a national and rational one, to keep up a breed of animals superior in speed, stoutness, and symmetry to those of every other country; and one use of fox-hunting, although not the only one, is to keep up the stock of hardy, fearless riders, who, when leading a charge of cavalry against their enemies, have ever proved themselves superior to every other race of people in the world. These, then, are the uses of fox-hunting, to prevent our nobility, gentry, and yeomanry from degenerating into milksops; to keep alive the spirit of chivalry, the knowledge of horsemanship, and the contempt of danger. Another use of fox-hunting is that the place of fixture in the hunting field becomes a focus of attraction from all sides of the country—a grand reunion of the neighbouring gentry—where, if not all, the great majority do congregate to discuss other topics as well as that of the chase. The bold yeomanry are there also, and men of every class, who can participate in this national sport without being considered intruders. The hunting field, like the race-course, is open equally to all Her

Majesty's liege subjects; and the covert's side is to the country what Epsom Downs are to the metropolitans—a place for recreation and amusement; for it would be as absurd to say that the whole field is composed of sportsmen, as that the whole concourse of spectators on the race-course consists of betting men. *Spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur et ipsi.*

In a social point of view, therefore, fox-hunting is productive of some benefit, as tending to keep up good fellowship and communion amongst those who, living out of visiting distances from each other, would otherwise have perhaps few opportunities of meeting. It is also in the zenith of its season when all other country amusements, save shooting and coursing, are at a stand, and when Members of Parliament have laid aside the weightier concerns of the nation, to luxuriate in their country seats, and give some little relaxation to their wearied frames and over-worked brains. To those, of course, I allude, who have any brains to work for the good of their country, not to the drones of the hive. It is not necessary to argue, as some have, that fox-hunting and field-sports deserve support on account of the influence they may possess in attaching our aristocracy and landed proprietors to their homes, although no doubt many are swayed by these considerations; but notwithstanding the devious spirit of the age, the instinctive love of country animates still the breast of every true Briton whose heart responds to the words of the old song—

> "'Midst pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
> Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

Neither shall I enter on another favourite plea so often used by the advocates of fox-hunting, as to its utility in causing money to flow more readily into the pockets of the farmers for the enhanced value of their produce; such being admitted to be the case in the neighbourhood of large hunting establishments. Irrespective of these advantages to the country, the employment it affords to so many, and the taxes it contributes to the revenue, I advocate the cause of the "Noble Science" on its own merits alone. Fox-hunting stands pre-eminently first on the list of all British sports, none excepted. It is the most manly, unselfish, exciting, invigorating pastime, worthy of the highest patronage, and deserving the support of every man who wishes well to his country.

At the same time I do not wish to see any revival of the state of things which existed in the latter part of the last century, when few manufacturing towns were without a subscription pack kept up by a club of clerks and apprentices, to the great loss of their own time, injury of the surrounding country, and general demoralization of the neighourhood.

CHAPTER VII.

Riding *to* Hounds, and Riding *after* them.—The proper use of Reins and Stirrups.—When the Hounds speak, the Hunters should be silent.—The Momentous Moment.—How to Steer across Country.—Men who try to catch the Fox by themselves.—Reason for Riding on the Down-wind side of the Hounds.—Horses' Heads not made to hold on by.—Fair and foolish ways of taking Fences.—Head and Heart required in Riding to Hounds.—Craners and Funkers.—Relation between the Master of Hounds and the Members of a Hunt.

Riding to hounds, and riding after them, are very far from being one and the same thing; and of the former class of sportsmen the number is extremely small, in comparison with the large body of fox-hunters who assemble at the place of meeting. Neither is the art or knowledge of riding to hounds so easily attained as at first may appear likely. Hunting men may be divided into three classes—those who already know their business in the field when following a pack of fox-hounds;

those who are willing and endeavouring to learn it; and those (the great majority) who don't care a rap about it. To the first, no observations of mine need be addressed; to the second, a few hints may not be deemed intrusive; and to the third, remonstrances and reproof are necessary, to prevent them spoiling the sport of others.

In these days of universal knowledge, when everybody knows everything, and men are supposed to ride better than men ever have ridden before, it might be considered the height of presumption in my attempting to throw out a few preliminary hints on mounting and managing a horse. I will therefore content myself with one observation, that the man who cannot ride across country without the aid of reins and stirrups has no pretension to the character of a perfect sportsman. This is the best test of a good seat, although not a very agreeable one.

"Without the aid of reins!" I hear some one exclaim; "that is impossible."

But my meaning is, that a silken thread only should be attached to the bridle by which the horse might be guided, but which would break on the least effort of the rider to *hold on by*. There are hundreds who can and do make a very good fight across country with the assistance of reins and stirrups, by which they are kept upright in the saddle; but take away these pulleys and props, and many a man who thinks himself an uncommonly fine horseman would be on his back at the very first fence he should charge without them. A firm, free, and easy seat in the saddle being therefore considered as indispensable in a fox-hunter, we may proceed to make a few remarks "on riding to hounds."

The first step to be taken in advance before you can ride to hounds is to get a good start with them, and to effect this most necessary arrangement it is incumbent that your ideas should be collected, and your whole attention engrossed by the preliminary business—the working of the hounds—as soon as the fox is on foot. A good eye and ear are of the greatest importance; and at the first whimper of a hound all discussion with your friends, whether on politics, horseflesh, or any other interesting topic, should immediately cease. When the hounds begin to throw their tongues, the time has arrived for yours to be silent. Should the pack be working their fox in a piece of gorse, you have little else to do than sit patiently in your saddle, awaiting the issue or exit of the animal, taking care to get away from the point at which he may attempt, or it may be attempted on the part of the huntsman, to make him break. On the fox making his appearance outside the covert, you may dispense with the formality or civility shown to foxes generally by enthusiastic sportsmen, of taking off your hat and wishing him good morning; and it will be fortunate (supposing a large field assembled) if he is not turned back by some compliment of this sort into the hounds' mouths.

When the fox is fairly away (should the scene be laid in the fashionable shires of Leicester or Northampton) it is not improbable that a couple of hundred of the finest fellows in the world will be immediately in his wake before a hound makes his appearance outside the covert. This, no doubt, is a very ticklish moment for a nervous man and a fidgety horse; but keep your own and your horse's temper within bounds. Your business is with the hounds, not with the horsemen, if you aspire to the character of a true sportsman. Let these *harey-starey* fellows go—wait for the hounds—at least, until the first few couples have settled down to the scent; then, with one eye on them and the other forward to your fence, go along. Ride wide of the pack, about fifty yards right or left, as the wind may be, taking care to keep under it, but, above all, avoid riding *on the line of the hounds,* lest the death of Jupiter or

Solomon be laid at your door; for depend upon it, the man who kills a favourite hound is never forgiven or forgotten by the Master or huntsman, who, although they may *say* little, *think* a good deal about that individual who has the misfortune to destroy or seriously damage one of their pets; and not without cause, seeing that a good fox-hound cannot be replaced by money. It is marvellous how hounds thread their way through two or three hundred horsemen without accident, and how they escape being ridden over at fences by a lot of madcaps, who seem to think it is the hounds' business to get out of their way, instead of their avoiding them.

Well, we are now streaming away, and if you feel incompetent to mark out a line for yourself, take the huntsman for your pilot; go *with* him, not *after* him, on the offside from the pack, but as he is a man of great consequence don't ride too near him. This brings me, at once, on debateable ground—how near to the hounds any stranger has a right to ride. We hear, very commonly, of men riding *alongside of the leading couples;* now, it is quite clear that no man, save huntsman or Master, has either any cause or any right to be in such near proximity. What would be thought of spectators on a cricket ground rushing in, knocking the ball about, and interfering with the game, or not allowing the players room for their exertions? The case is parallel in the hunting-field. "He comes too near, who comes to be denied;" and the rider who presses in so closely upon the hounds as to prevent them swinging to recover the line is interfering most unquestionably and most unwarrantably with *their game*, and at the same time, perhaps, spoiling the sport of the whole field, merely for the empty boast of having *lived alongside the leading couples for the first twenty minutes.*

But I go a point beyond this, and maintain that there is no *necessity* even for a huntsman to be so close to his leading hounds, if he has a pair of good eyes in his head. Although, making every allowance for the excitement of a fox-chase, we must not forget that there are many jealous riders in every hunt, who choose to assume, for the sake of distinction alone, this position with the hounds, which none, save the huntsman, has any pretension to occupy. You may ride to the right or left of the pack if you please, but you have no right to ride so near as to interfere with their movements or be in their way. I do not recommend taking the down-wind side of the pack, from the idea of a fox always running down-wind whenever he is pressed, for he has invariably, when found, some point to make, which he will endeavour to reach without the slightest regard to wind or weather; but because, should hounds, by any means, give you the slip, by being down-wind, their cry will be borne *to*, not *from* you, and of course you will have a better chance of recovering lost ground. A fresh fox, when homeward bound, goes as straight as he can go, up or down wind, wherever his point may happen to lie, and any deviation from his direct course may be accounted for by his meeting obstructions in his path, such as a team of horses in a field, or an old woman in a lane. When barred out from *home*, driven out of his knowledge of country, or beaten, he will then go down-wind as a last resource, when he has not power to run against it; but it is not natural, as some suppose, or rather habitual, in a fox, to sink the wind, as long as his strength enables him to hold on his line, or he has got a point to reach.

There is a phrase often used by sporting men in reference to a hunter, "Hold him tight by the head, and shove along," which, if it means any thing at all, means a process similar to that adopted by coachmen with their bearing reins, for the sake of keeping their horses' heads well up, at the expense of the poor brute's comfort and power of action; but I should most decidedly deprecate any such treatment of a horse which has any pretensions to the name of a made hunter. What would be the result of holding him well by the head, and cramming in the spurs at first starting? It would render him, if high spirited, fractious and out of temper for the whole run, and, in revenge, he would probably put his rider into the first ditch, or topple him over a five-barred gate—and serve him quite right. To men who cannot sit in their saddles without holding on by their horses' heads, such advice may be very necessary; but the idea of an experienced fox-hunter going off in this style from the covert side when the hounds are just away is quite preposterous. There are times when your horse, being blown by a quick thing, or distressed by a long one, in going at his fences then, or labouring through heavy ground, will require to be held in hand a little; but I have seen many horses, even at that time of distress, pulled into a ditch by being held *too tightly in hand*, which, if left to their own discretion, they would most certainly have cleared. A made hunter ought to have perfect liberty of his head; but I do not mean by this that he is to be *shoved along*, with spurs in his side, and reins hanging loosely about his neck—this is the other extreme. But on one point I am quite clear, that a horse which knows his business in the field would carry a good rider much more safely to the end of a run, even with loose reins, and without whip or spur, than an inexperienced one using all three to his annoyance and hindrance.

He that would see the end as well as the beginning of a good run must commence his operations on horseback in a quiet, rational manner, and conduct them throughout with discretion; bearing in mind that the reins are intended chiefly as regulators to a horse's speed, or occasional supporters in certain emergencies. For this purpose then, our tyro, when going away with the pack from the gorse, with a crowd of fellows in advance on a line with the fox, will hold his reins tightly in his left hand (which should be forward over the pommel of the saddle), and lightly in regard to the horse's mouth. It is no business of yours how and where other men are riding. Take a line of your own, and, if possible, keep it. Don't be looking about, right and left, for the easiest place, or a gap in the hedge, by which time is lost, and you may be knocked over by crossing some other man's track, which would be only what you deserved. Before approaching the fence, you will perhaps have to regulate your horse's speed by a gentle pull at the bit, as a hint to take it easy; although, if an experienced hunter, he will know quite as well as yourself, or better, where and how to take off. Horses, when fresh, go fast enough at their leaps, with sufficient impetus to clear a ditch on the off side, without whip or spur. The former should never be used, and the latter very rarely; a pat on the neck, and a few words of encouragement to a generous animal, being much more efficacious than such unpleasant and unnecessary stimulants. There are some who advise a horse's head to be held firmly till *in the act* of rising at his fence, from which practice I must beg to dissent. A horse's speed, if necessary to be slackened, should be moderated some few strides *before reaching the fence;* but his head should *then* invariably be *at liberty* to take it in his own style; and in the act of leaping, the rider, by throwing himself a little backward in the saddle, may give a sufficient strain on the bit to prevent his horse floundering on the other side, were he inclined to do so.

I am no advocate for that *pully-hauley* system which prescribes the necessity of a man's carrying his horse, instead of the horse carrying him —which, although it may be applicable to a raw five-year-old, is not to be practised with a made hunter; and even with a raw five-year-old, it is far better to put a rough rider on his back, with instructions to let him go with a slack rein at hedge and ditch; and as experimental knowledge is always the best, after a roll or two he will learn to take care of himself. The greatest luxury in a hunter is his having a fine mouth; but half the hunters in these days are spoilt in the breaking, and their mouths, by the constant strain on the bit, become as insensible and hard as shoe-leather; and what would a snaffle-bridle horse do with a double ditch and bank, if held tight in hand by a sharp curb, but drop short on the landing side? Scores of times I have seen horses thus ridden striving against the bit to get their heads free, and pulled into the off ditch by a timid or inexperienced rider holding on by the rein. A hunter should have his head, even when nearly beaten, at his fences, although your hand must be ever ready to help when help is needed.

Now for your place with the hounds, which demands *your* first consideration, if *riding to hunt.* Keeping wide of them, and not so forward as to interfere with their turning, your eyes will be fixed on the leading couples, and as they incline to the right or the left, your horse's head must follow the same direction; and take care you don't sit staring them in the face when bending towards you, or be so much occupied with your horse as to cause inattention to their movements. The art of *riding to hounds* is easily learnt by a man of good nerve, quick eye, and common observation; but the fact is that ninety men out of a hundred talk and think of everything else save the business in hand, their attention being too much engrossed with their horses and friends to watch the proceedings of the pack. Out of a field of three hundred horsemen who go away with the hounds before them, at the end of fifty minutes fifty men are scarcely placed. But what becomes of the other two hundred and fifty? Half of them have not the head, and the other half have not the heart, to ride to hounds. There is also great tact in going properly at fences, in which so many are deficient, and for the want of which such multifarious difficulties and drawbacks occur in a sharp run of forty or forty-five minutes. Many men ride at every obstacle in the same manner, thereby acquiring many tumbles; but the safest rule is to put your horse slowly (pulling him into a trot before taking off) at high fences, such as gates, walls, wattles, or rails, where height is to be surmounted; and briskly at brooks and other wide leaps where breadth only is to be covered. A wide bank, with double ditches, should be approached cautiously, and done by two efforts; but an upright quickset, without any bank, and a ditch on both sides, must be covered by one flight, or at a single bound, for which greater impetus is required.

There is another point to be attended to also—the selection of the firmest ground to ride on. If men choose to follow a leader, they are bound, in common courtesy, to allow him both time and space to get clear over to the other side of the fence, before putting their horses at it or him. There is in every hunt a class of *craners* and *funkers*, who will pertinaciously follow on through gaps, instead of taking a line of their own, although the delays attendant on this proceeding prevent their seeing anything of a run; but hustling and jostling is a most unjustifiable offence in the hunting-field, and those who adopt such practices may fairly be set down as tailors. In all games and pastimes, a man is expected to know something of the rules before joining in them; but the reverse appears to be the case in fox-hunting, where all, or nearly all, go their own wicked way, evidently bent on causing all the mischief they can, without the inclination to do any good; in short, they do not wish for and will not attend to instructions. Even when hounds come to a check, there are a lot of fellows mooning about the field, often in the very middle of the pack, who won't turn their horses' heads either to the right or left, or make the least effort to get out of the hounds' way; and can any surprise be expressed at the Master losing his temper under such circumstances? although half the liberties taken in this manner, and obstructions to sport, are caused by want of firmness and decision in the Master himself, to whom every man in the field is bound to pay as much deference as a soldier does to his commanding officer; and if they will not submit to his directions, they have no business to be out with his hounds.

CHAPTER VIII.

Rules to be observed in the Breeding of Fox-Hounds.—Whimsical Sites for Kennels.—Months in which Whelps should have their Birthdays.—Dressing Hounds.—Value of Vegetable Diet.—Some Observations on the Science of Breeding.

A few words may be necessary on the treatment of brood bitches and their whelps. It must be obvious to every man acquainted with animal economy generally that healthy progeny cannot be expected from unhealthy parents, and unless the juices and fluids of the mother are in a healthy state before parturition the whelps will suffer accordingly; and from this first cause of vitiated milk arises many of the diseases with which young animals, particularly puppies, are afflicted.

> Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
> Testa diu.

New stomachs, as well as new casks, are particularly susceptible of lacteal acidities, or impurities, which engender worms, rickets, and other maladies; and it may be laid down as a general rule that air and exercise are essentials indispensable to all animals in a state of gestation, from whom healthy and vigorous offspring is expected. From the want of these during the month of April, one season, when absent from home, I lost five magnificent brood bitches with their first litters, being kept confined in the yard appropriated to them, instead of being allowed to roam at large as soon as they became heavy, which was my general practice.

Exceptions there are to nearly every general rule, and so in this case it may be objected that this liberty of action cannot be accorded to brood bitches in every locality, of which I am aware, from the extraordinary situations in which we find some kennels placed, close to villages, railway stations, or in the vicinity of large game preserves—*Quot homines tot sententiæ;* and the sites of many kennels are whimsical in the extreme, reflecting little credit on the good sense or good taste of their projector. A friend of mine, when he commenced keeping fox-hounds, although possessing very good kennels in a quiet, retired situation, would persist in having them removed and placed close to his lodge gate, near a turnpike road, by which the old hounds were continually disturbed day and night; and the young hounds, when returned from their walks to the greenyard, were kept during their play hours in a state of incessant excitement and barking by passing objects and noises; and when entered there could be little cause for surprise at their being found rather free with their tongues. If there is a site more desirable than another for a kennel of fox-hounds, it is that of the greatest retirement, and secluded from the busy haunts of men—the most solitary spot that can be selected—

Far in a wilderness obscure
The *lonely kennel* lay.

But to take things as we find them, if the brood bitches are not permitted to roam at large, they may be walked out by the feeder or huntsman for air and exercise two or three hours a day. As oysters are in season only whilst there is an "r" in the month, so is it my impression that whelps born in February, March, and April are much more vigorous than those of later date; in fact, my prejudice (if you will) was so strong on this point, that I never placed any confidence in puppies ushered into the world after the second week in May, with which, perhaps, the old vulgar couplet known to farmers' wives had something to do, although relating to birds instead of hounds—

Ducks hatched in June
Aren't worth an old tune.

At any rate, I never had any luck with late whelps, which were often crooked in their legs, weakly, and soft in their constitutions, and always more liable to distemper. If foul in their skins, or tormented by ticks and fleas (those pests of old and dirty kennels), the brood bitches may be dressed over with three parts rape oil and one of spirits of turpentine, reduced to the consistency of cream, with yellow or black sulphur, a month or three weeks before whelping—no other ingredient is necessary—but the day before dressing, all hounds require a good dose of physic; syrup of buckthorn, with Ethiop's mineral, may be mixed up in their food, when they are to be fed late in the evening, and half an ounce of Epsom salts given the next morning, in some broth or thin lap, and, as an alterative, equal quantities of sulphur and cream of tartar may be administered twice a-week.

Fleas and ticks being generated by filthy beds, the benches in every kennel should be well brushed over with a stiff besom every alternate morning at the least, if not every day, and all the dust well shaken out of the old litter. But as this is a process to which kennel-men and feeders manifest great objections on account of the manual labour to be employed thereon, the work is generally performed in a slovenly manner, or a little fresh straw only thrown on the benches, which, in consequence of this neglect, become a hotbed for the production of these vermin. Whitewashing the walls with hot lime is also another preventive, which requires to be done twice, if not three times, in the year,—spring, summer, and autumn,—and with these applications and precautions, hounds ought to be as free from fleas and ticks as a lady's lap-dog.

To dressing hounds periodically with those noxious compounds used by many huntsmen, I have ever manifested the greatest antipathy and aversion; and having entirely failed to elicit from some of the cleverest men of this class one single tenable argument in favour of this practice, I am constrained to draw conclusions from their perseverance in a course so obsolete and indefensible anything but complimentary to men who in other respects (field practice, forsooth) are gifted with a large share of intellect, and who, in making a scientific cast in one direction, whilst the fox is gone in another, can give a very plausible, if not satisfactory, explanation why the fox ought to have made his point to such a covert, although the fox took a very different line and view of the case; but if he was a fool, the huntsman of course could not help it. The fox would naturally submit in his defence, as an *argumentum ad hominem,* which was the biggest fool of the two, biped or quadruped, Q.E.D.? But to recover *my* line, which is seldom a straight one, nostrums, mixums, and quackeries are abominations to my ears, eyes, and nose; and when out of all the fiery compounds of these highly-lauded dressings, the only ingredient I could ever detect as being at all applicable to the case in point, *i. e.* cutaneous eruptions, itch, or mange, was sulphur; the others could, of course, be dispensed with, at a considerable saving of expense to the master, and of pain to the unhappy animal operated upon. Why it is necessary, to cure a slight blotch on a hound's skin, that he should undergo the ordeal of being nearly poisoned, and his legs caused to swell to half the size of his body, for the life and soul of me (as Pat said) it bothers me quite entirely.

Some years ago I lent a very favourite hound to a friend who had just taken a new huntsman, quite perfection in his opinion; and a few days after, on calling at the kennel, I saw my old favourite lying dead on the dung-heap, blown up like a bladder, absolutely poisoned by this fool's dressing. So great was my dislike to dressing hounds, that for many years no other remedy was ever used by me for little eruptions on the skin than plain yellow sulphur, sprinkled and rubbed into the hounds' coats; and a huntsman who cannot keep his pack clean and in blooming condition without having recourse to noxious applications has little pretension to the character of a good kennel manager, however talented he may be in other respects.

It is too much the fashion to feed hounds on the same food all the year round, the *quantity* only being reduced during the summer months, for no earthly reason, but contrary to all reason; and to this practice must be attributed the necessity for dressing, bleeding, and physicking, all of which might be avoided by a partly vegetable diet in hot weather, which common sense would prescribe, but prejudice, combined with ignorance, refuses to adopt. Cabbages, young nettles, and mangold wurzel are most wholesome vegetables for dogs, and should be freely used, at least two days in the week, from the beginning of May until August; independent of their cooling and alterative properties, they will effect a great saving in oatmeal.

Of whelps, the finest are generally produced from dams of the middle age, from three to six years old, although the first litter from a large, lengthy mother often proves as clever as any subsequent one. With fox-hounds I never considered it safe or judicious to breed from any which had not worked fairly through to the end of their second season, or until the March of that year, by which time their characters will have become tolerably well established.

On the subject of breeding *in-and-in*, as it is termed in sportsmen's phrase, or from animals of the same family, great diversity of opinion exists, founded partly, I am inclined to think, on the *dicta* of sporting authors of some celebrity. Cattle breeders, also, do not raise any serious objections to this system, which is not found to be at variance with the production of animals of good form and fashion, upon the long-established principle or rule of nature, like begetting like; but even supposing this course may answer the purpose with cattle, it does not follow that it should be attended with the same beneficial results in breeding hounds and other sporting dogs, from which something more than mere shape and symmetry is expected. Having tried the experiment of breeding from brother and sister, father and daughter, merely as an experiment to watch the issue, I may state that, as to the form of the produce, no exception could be taken. They were clever as their parents, resembling them also in nose and instinct, but decidedly deficient in courage, less hardy in constitution, and wanting in robustness of limb and frame. As far, therefore, as my own experience has led me, breeding in-and-in has proved a complete failure, lacking those great essentials to the character of sporting dogs—courage, stoutness, and good constitution—without which the most perfectly-formed hounds, greyhounds, or pointers are little worth.

The science (for it is a science) of breeding animals successfully, whether in reference to cattle, horses, or dogs, is comparatively little understood, and requires much more study and attention than is often bestowed upon it by agriculturists and sportsmen generally. Although since the establishment of agricultural societies farmers have been stimulated to greater exertions, and a more strict inquiry into animal economy, still the science and practical knowledge of producing bullocks, sheep, or even pigs of first-rate quality, considering the numbers now embarked in the enterprise, is confined to a small number; and on one point I am well assured, that the handsomest herd of cattle, or the cleverest pack of fox-hounds, if handed over to the management of an unskilled person, would in a very few years degenerate into an inferior class of animals.

To breed successfully, a thorough knowledge of the essential points of animal structure is absolutely necessary to begin with, then the consideration how certain deficiencies in one form may be supplied or counteracted by the exuberance of the same in another; *exempli gratiâ*:—for the purpose of elucidation, let us take for our subject a lengthy, roomy, though loosely made fox-hound bitch, slack behind the shoulders, deficient in muscle in the loins, and a little too high on the legs. The mate to be selected must of course be short on the leg, particularly good in the loins, with muscle strongly developed through his whole frame, and with plenty of bone also. Now with these requisites, it is very probable the dog may be a trifle too short in the back, or not over-clean in his neck; still, as possessing the points which require development in the other, any such little drawbacks may be disregarded, and from the union of the two a progeny may be fairly calculated upon as near perfection as possible.

But if, on the other hand, a dog of similar proportions to the bitch be made use of, the whelps will be in all probability long, loose-made, leggy animals, without any pretensions to symmetry or power. But a *vice versa* case will not succeed, that is, a short-bodied, narrow-flanked dam will seldom produce a clever litter of whelps, although coupled with a dog as long as a hurdle. The fact is too often disregarded, that the mother is generally the producer of perfection or imperfection according with her own frame; and from the ignorance of or inattention to this first law of nature, the numerous weeds in every establishment date their origin.

A smart-looking, handsome-topped mare is too often consigned to the stud, for which purpose in all other respects she is totally unfitted; length and depth of flank being an indispensable point in brood mares as well as in brood bitches. Horses will go in all shapes, evenly or comfortably to their riders is another question; but go they do and will, even with crooked legs, if not overweighted or overworked, provided there is muscular power somewhere. But, however high couraged and intrinsically good in themselves, it would be a hazardous experiment indeed breeding from such faulty animals. I have as yet only alluded to the shape or framework, which in cattle breeding is the chief if not only consideration; in fact, a bullock can scarcely be too long or too large, provided he possess aptitude to fatten, as all his faults and deficiencies may be easily concealed under that accumulation of flesh and tallow by which prize cattle are so unenviably distinguished.

But with horses and hounds the case is reversed, every imperfection, by the necessary process of training, being exposed to view. A decided preference is, however, generally given, by those who breed for the turf, to horses of thorough good blood, or well-established character as successful racers, without sufficient regard to their external form; and from the inattention to this point, the produce, although true, and hard, perhaps, as steel, will most likely lack power of action and speed, for although blood will tell, yet blood with symmetry, matched against blood without symmetry, will undoubtedly win the race. Whether in breeding horses or hounds, I have always attached the greatest importance to the dam, and have often witnessed the disappointment of others, who have placed their chief dependence on the sire. It has been said "that horses always go with their shoulders," which is intended of course to imply that the chief power of the animal lies in his fore-quarters, to which doctrine or maxim I cannot give an unconditional assent, although admitting that without freedom of action in those limbs a horse can scarcely go at all. But my impression has always been that the propelling power lies in the back and hind-quarters; and for hunters to carry weight, I have always looked for my chief dependence *behind the saddle.* A handsome forehead, with fine arched neck, and deep shoulders, lying well back, is very attractive either in horse or hound; but for speed and endurance, the hare form or Eclipse shoulder, with muscular loins and good hind-quarters, is of far greater importance.

CHAPTER IX.

Use of the Warm Bath for Hounds.—The Daily Constitutional.—Smooth Coats and Rough Coats.—Qualities essential to a Good Huntsman.—When the Horn should be used. — Beckford on Huntsmen and Whippers-in.—Order of Precedence in going to Covert.—Kennel Management.—Pen and Ink Portraits.—Deer-hunting Extraordinary.

No animal is more susceptible of cold, or more liable to rheumatic attacks, than the dog; and although I never had recourse to artificial heat from flues in the kennel, the use of them, in moderation, cannot, I think, fail to be beneficial in very cold weather, particularly if the lodging rooms are damp; but after a fair trial of the warm bath recommended by Mr. Delme Radcliffe, and adopted by many masters of fox hounds a few years since, its use was discontinued from a conviction of the impracticability of carrying the process out to a beneficial effect. A warm bath, with thorough dry rubbing afterwards, is one of the greatest restoratives to a man after a severe day's work; and so, no doubt, it would prove to hounds also, provided the dogs' coat could be rubbed thoroughly dry immediately, without exposure to cold drafts; but it would take half the night to accomplish this object as it ought to be done, with sixteen or eighteen couples, by the exertion of huntsman and feeder, unless several extra hands were employed for the purpose.

The plan generally adopted in regard to the warm bath was to plunge the hounds into a large wooden trough, filled with warm pot liquor from the boiler, immediately on their return to the kennel after hunting, keeping them immersed up to their necks for a few minutes, whilst the process of ablution was being carried on by the aid of a rough brush, then feeding and sending them to their straw pallets without further trouble, and trusting to their being licked dry by one another. An attempt was made in my own kennel to improve upon this summary process, by the use of sponges and rough cloths; but failing to accomplish my purpose of getting the hounds sufficiently dry within a reasonable time, the practice was discontinued, and the more readily from witnessing the evil effects of this slovenly method upon a neighbouring pack, whose unhealthy appearance at the end of the season was, I think, attributable to the injudicious use of the warm bath, and subsequent exposure to cold air. In place of the warm bath, therefore, I returned to my old plan of the foot-bath, by passing the hounds two or three times through warm water and pot liquor, up to their knees only, and using a hard brush to rub off the dirt sticking to their legs and stomachs.

The principle of warm bathing, when hounds are tired, and torn with briars and thorns, is quite right if they can be passed from the bath-room into the feeding house, and thence transferred into a warm lodging-room, heated by hot air, without encountering any chilling currents; and with a change of dry straw, and plenty of it, I have little doubt of their being all the better for their ablutions, and more quickly renovated in strength and spirits; but lacking attention to all these particular observances, about which huntsmen and feeders are not disposed to be very punctilious, the warm bath is of very questionable benefit as a general practice. The duties of a huntsman, if properly discharged, are sufficiently onerous in the common way, without imposing additional and unnecessary burthens upon his time and patience, and it is in most cases a good maxim "to let well alone."

Fox-hounds have done very well without the luxury of a warm bath for many years; and in this age of indolence, when every substitute is used to lessen labour of every description, it is not likely to find much favour with kennel officials. There are other matters of more importance to be attended to, which are often carelessly passed over and left to the feeder, but unquestionably belong to the huntsman's department; and one of these is, allowing the hounds to stand shivering on a cold or wet wintry morning in the yards while the lodging-rooms are being washed down.

Although I do not consider any range of kennels complete for fox-hounds without sufficient lodging-rooms to admit of every division of the pack having a dry floor to enter upon every morning, over which no water has passed since the previous day, yet, as the great majority of kennels are thus incomplete, and the hounds occupy day after day the same benches, with no change of floors, these, of course, require the use of the bucket and besom every morning, to cleanse them from their impurities; and it is the huntsman's business to walk the hounds about, in paddock, field, or anywhere else, whilst the lodging-room doors are thrown open, and the floor washed and mopped dry before their return to them again.

It was our invariable practice to walk the hounds out several times during the day into a large paddock adjoining the kennels, which conduced not a little to their cleanliness; but the same purpose would not be answered by letting them out into the green-yard only. When the huntsman is engaged in the field, this duty devolves on the feeder, and should not be neglected; but on the morning of hunting, the pack selected overnight for that day's work should be taken out by the huntsman for a quarter of an hour's walk, who will thus be better able to judge whether any hound is lame or unfit for hunting. Not approving of the warm bath, we had recourse to stiff brushes to clean the hounds from dirt the morning after hunting; this process, by keeping up the circulation of the pores of the skin, and cleansing it from the accumulation of dust and scurf, is a great promoter of health, and tends also to keep the hounds' coats in blooming condition. There is, however, as much distinction between the glossy appearance of some hounds, and the roughness of others, as in their different constitutions; some will always look well, however neglected, whilst no brilliancy can ever be imparted to others; and this arises from the difference of blood, some being of the smooth, and others of the rough-coated species of original fox-hounds. All huntsmen are ambitious, and justly so, of turning their pack out in blooming condition, some succeeding with little trouble, whilst others labour in vain to produce this great desideratum; but to a genuine experienced fox-hunter there are other indications besides a silky coat which show the proof of the pudding.

Taking it altogether, the rough time with the smooth, a huntsman's life is replete with as much happiness as falls to the lot of the greater portion of mankind. He is well paid for doing that which others are obliged to pay heavily to obtain. His work is his amusement—at least so it ought to be, and *is* no doubt, in the great majority of cases; although I have known two instances to the contrary, in a huntsman and whipper-in, who being brought up in the profession, followed it afterwards, not from choice, but from necessity. No man, however, will attain the perfection of the art or science of fox-hunting, who has not natural talent and inclination towards it, with a thorough knowledge of the habits of the animal he is pursuing, joined with those essentials, patience and perseverance. Good temper is also of essential service to a huntsman, although some of our most brilliant performers in the field have lacked sadly that most useful commodity, and lose their heads entirely when giving way to passion. Excitement and irritability are, however, almost allowable sometimes, when contraventions occur at critical moments, vexatious enough to try the patience of Job; and I am inclined to think that the exhibition of a little temper in the huntsmen on these occasions has a beneficial effect on the field, and conduces to keep up his authority. The man who is entrusted with the management of a pack of fox-hounds holds a very responsible situation; and as all our sport depends upon his exertions, he is, if fit to hold this position, entitled to respect. *Aut Cæsar aut nullus* ought to be his motto, which should exempt him from interference from any quarter, even the Master's, whilst hunting the hounds; and as he will have to bear all the blame when things go wrong, let him have also all the credit when things go well.

To avail ourselves of huntsman's capabilities, and to do him justice, he must be a free agent in the field, with regard to finding and killing or losing his fox. The Master may direct him where to draw, and even on this point he ought to be consulted; but when the fox is found, all interference should cease. I dislike even to see a horn attached to the master's saddle (particularly if a young man), which is often productive but of one result—confusion. The sound of the horn, when in judicious hands, is like a word spoken in due season, how good is it! But I have known disastrous work with a young Master and young huntsman, each blowing apparently against the other, to the annihilation of sport, and distraction of the pack. To render the horn effective, it should never be used except on particular or pressing occasions; hounds then know its meaning, and fly to it eagerly; but the perpetual toot, toot, toot, one hears with some packs, recalls to mind the fable of the boy and the wolf. Hounds care no more for this continual tooting than for the braying of an ass. Two or three sharp twangs, when the fox is found, and again when he breaks covert, will get the pack well together and away; but beyond this the horn should be rarely handled.

As I would concede to a huntsman in the field full and free scope to display his talents and ingenuity, so should I expect a proper attention to his duties in every other respect. What noblemen and gentlemen have condescended to do, is certainly not to much too expect from a huntsman; and however tired and fagged he may be after a hard day, he is bound to feed his hounds before taking his own dinner, and not leave them to the kennel-man and whipper-in. There is no objection to his horse being brought to his door on the hunting morning, and I approve of every mark of deference shown by the subordinates of the establishment to a man of his high calling. This is as it should be—he is one *in* authority, although *under* authority also; but the *modus in rebus* must not be overlooked either; and I call it conceit, almost amounting to impertinence, in any huntsman dismounting at his kennel door, and after giving his horse to the helper, handing over his hounds to the feeder for the night, without condescending to bestow upon them any further trouble. Solomon thought it a great misfortune for any people to have a child for their king; no less misfortune is it to a hunting establishment when its Master is an infant in knowledge of the noble science.

There are many huntsmen of established reputation who will take as great, perhaps greater, interest in the welfare of their hounds than the Master himself, and the entire management of the pack may be safely entrusted to their care; their credit is at stake when anything is amiss, independent of the interest they really feel in their hounds. But there are others of a different character, who require a Master's supervision. I believe it was an observation made by Beckford, that if he had his choice of a second-rate huntsman and a first-rate whipper-in, or the reverse, he would select the former; and I am of the same opinion, although for a different reason. First-class huntsmen of the modern school are too much given to assume the credit of killing foxes to themselves, and far too eager to make a display of their talents by scientific casts, taking those liberties with their pack which certainly must prove injurious; whereas a man of moderate abilities, diffident of his own knowledge, will be content to give the hounds a fair opportunity of displaying theirs first; and seconded by a clever whipper-in, I will back him to shew more sport, and maintain a better pack, than the great genius.

It is very desirable, if not necessary, for a huntsman to possess a good temper and kind disposition, without which his hounds will never become really attached to him; but these are not indispensable qualifications in a whipper-in, who, to be perfect in his calling, must be held in terror by the *evil-doers* of the pack; in fact, they should be as ready to fly *from* his rate, as willing to fly *to* the cheer of their huntsman. His presence, or even the sound of his voice, should have the effect of restoring order immediately. It is much more difficult to find a good whipper-in, thoroughly up to his business, than a good huntsman; and without intending to detract from the merits of the latter, there are quite as many, if not more, opportunities for the display of genius presented to the former. He should be a man of few words and deep thought; when hounds are running riot, rapid and silent in his descent upon them; when a young hound speaks to a scent, he will have the sense to wait and see what he is doing before interference, as the most vicious and determined hare-hunters may sometimes be right, and he will take care that the delinquent is within his reach before he attempts to punish him; a word of caution or rate, if the hound is in high covert, where he cannot get at him; but if he can get at him, the blow should fall first, and the rate after.

In going to covert, that is, when the troops are in marching order, the place generally assigned to the *first* whipper-in is a long distance in advance of the huntsman; and to the *second*, a short distance behind him and the pack. This was, and is still, I believe, the orthodox rule on such occasions; but I shall take the liberty of *reversing* it, by placing the first man a *short* distance before, and the other a *long* distance behind the hounds. The only use of a first whipper-in before the pack is as a pioneer, to clear obstructions, open gates, prevent the hounds being kicked by horses, going to covert, or, when meeting carriages and waggons, to obtain a clear passage; but, save when such obstacles are in view, or likely to be encountered, he may drop back within speaking distance of the huntsman (provided the two are on speaking terms, which is not invariably the case), and have a little quiet chat on the probable events of the day, which most likely, from the diversity of their occupations, they have had no previous opportunity of discussing.

In many establishments the first whipper-in during the hunting season is seldom seen in the kennel, having other business to claim his attention; and it happens not rarely that huntsmen are jealous of the whipper-in meddling with their domestic arrangements, which can be conducted more pleasantly between the feeder and themselves; in fact, Mr. Huntsman deems it politic to keep Jack as much in the dark as possible touching kennel affairs, lest on the first fitting opportunity the said Jack should slip too glibly into his shoes. Jack has probably once or twice (very likely much oftener) slipped away with the hounds, and had a run to himself with a few select friends, who begin, perhaps, to talk of Jack being quite equal to play first fiddle; which is productive of great coolness, if not the cut direct, between these individuals, and Jack in consequence becomes a suspected and dangerous person. It is quite necessary, however, that the first whipper-in should be able to handle the pack upon emergencies, when the huntsman may be ill, or disabled by a fall; and the fact of his being competent to do so has also a beneficial effect upon his superior in office, and prevents his entertaining too high an opinion of himself.

When drawing covert, the place of the first whipper-in may be almost anywhere his genius may direct him, except with the hounds, although he must not be very far from them, and ready at a moment's notice to lend assistance when required. In small places, gorse or spinnies, he will be on the look-out at the further end, and have the sense to take care that when the fox looks out of his hiding-place he is not scared by his red jacket or red nose to look in again. I was once blessed with a whipper-in who almost invariably hallooed the fox back into covert. He could not help it. Jack was composed of very excitable matter, and no sooner did he view a fox than his mouth opened almost involuntarily, and out came the "Tally-ho!" He knew perfectly well it was against all rules, and he had received many severe lectures on the subject, to very little purpose, for Jack had not patience to view him quietly away, and clear of the first field; but, as he expressed himself to me, "his heart seemed to jump up into his mouth" the moment he saw the fox break covert. He was undeniably one of the most enthusiastic fellows I ever saw with hounds, and almost crazy when we were running into our fox; and being in all other respects a good servant, I made some allowance for his insane propensity to halloo foxes back into covert.

I had another whipper-in, a great *slip-slop*, who was ever in the wrong place, and seldom viewed a fox at all; he was always coffee-housing with some particular friend, and of course no fox approached his position. He possessed a thin shrill voice, his rate sounded as a cheer, and he had no notion of getting at hounds, or stopping them running riot. He was, moreover, conceited as ignorant. We were one day, during the cub-hunting, drawing some coverts on the hill-side, where outflying deer often harboured, and I had given him a particular caution about encouraging the young hounds (which he was very fond of doing) without actually seeing what they were running. A deer was soon roused, and some of the young hopes of the pack began throwing their tongues right merrily. Hearing no old hounds joining them, I began rating, knowing there was some mischief going on; but, to my horror, that conceited fool Dick set to work cheering with might and main, causing some of the one-seasoned hunters to mix in the fray, and in ten minutes, before I could cross over from my side of the hill, Dick was away, with all the young hounds, racing over the open with a deer before them, which they ran for nearly an hour, through some other large coverts, before I could get up with them; when, dropping the huntsman, I was obliged to enact the part of whipper-in, and dashing in among the delinquents in some short underwood, I soon spoiled their fun, and seizing one of the most riotous by the hind leg, the wood soon re-echoed with his cries, and he never forgot the chastisement then administered; and if I had met Dick at this moment, the odds were in favour of his getting a double thonging also, but that cautious individual took especial care to keep clear of the row. As a first whip, however, he proved so utterly powerless, that I soon parted with him, and he descended to a second place, from which he never possessed sufficient talent to raise himself.

CHAPTER X.

On Feeding Fox-hounds.—A Pâté de Périgueux.—Some Remarks on Love and Horseflesh.—Marriages in France during the Reign of Terror.—Once a Huntsman always a Huntsman.—A Time for all Things.—How the Hunting Man's Pleasure may profit his Neighbour.—The Inevitable Hour.

The saying is not an uncommon one, that "anything is good enough for dogs." That is not the case, however, with fox-hounds, which require the best of food to keep them in condition during the hunting season. The best old oatmeal, after a fair trial of all other farinaceous food, has been found to be most productive of strength and muscle to endure fatigue, with the addition of horse-flesh; and although the latter may sound rather disgusting to ears polite, yet the flesh of a fat horse, without disease, is quite as nutritious and fit for food, or more so than that of many bullocks which are slaughtered for the use of man. On this point, however, I cannot speak from actual experience, although my feeder confessed to having tasted a slice from the round of a young fresh colt, which he pronounced to be as good, and *sweeter* than a beef-steak. But as horses and bullocks feed precisely alike (the chewing of the cud being excepted in the former), there is no valid reason why the flesh should not be equally wholesome.

Crabs and lobsters, the scavengers of the sea, are considered great delicacies, notwithstanding they subsist upon all kinds of impurities; and although it is not necessary to extend our researches too far, we should not allow prejudices to convert horse-flesh into the most disgusting of animal flesh. By this I do not mean to advocate its use as human food, but merely to show that there is nothing objectionable in its being given to hounds. Were it known how many of the beautiful white chickens are fed which claim so much attention on our festive board, or the ingredients of a *pâté de Périgueux* very minutely examined, they would lose somewhat of the favour so generally bestowed upon them. For myself, I must declare that, having once met with a suspicious-looking *morçeau* under one of these fashionable crusts, to which, by turning and contemplating it in every light, I could discover no other resemblance than that of a *cat's lip,* I have ever since maintained a most decided antipathy to pry into the contents of patties of every description (unless made at home), pork pies included, and scrupulously adhere to plain roast and boiled (not chickens, unless purchased from a farm-yard), beef, mutton, and veal. There is a vulgar saying, "What will not poison, will fatten." It may be true enough, for anything I can vouch to the contrary, and most probably is the case, since poisons are now so extensively used in all articles of general consumption.

But, although a *dog-feeder,* I must confess to great fastidiousness of taste in the eatables and drinkables which have to pass the ordeal of my very delicate palate. A short time since, an illustration of how patties are supposed to be compounded appeared in *Punch,* showing how a new setter-up of a rival cook-shop was defeated, by the proprietor of the old established concern paying a scavenger to throw a dead cat over his neighbour's counter when the shop was filled with customers. "There, Marm !" exclaimed the man, "that makes nine, and I'll call to-morrow for the money ;" with which, throwing pussy down, he hastily made his exit before the woman could recover from her astonishment at this brazen act; and it need scarcely be remarked that the desired effect was produced on the customers, who quickly dispersed, with rather queer sensations about the stomach!

Whether sausages and pork-pies are made of *horse-meat*, it behoveth us not perhaps too diligently to inquire, and certainly it is no business of mine, who have an unconquerable aversion to all such highly seasoned compounds; but although we admit hounds do eat horse-flesh, we are not quite satisfied that others besides my feeder have not partaken of the same meat finely minced and peppered. Knackers' yards are cleared out in a very unaccountable manner sometimes, and perhaps it may not be quite safe for the patronisers of patties, sausages, and gravy soup to speak too disrespectfully of kennel beef.

Seeing, therefore, that there is nothing very disgusting in the food eaten by fox-hounds, I do not conceive that any nobleman or gentleman would lose *caste*, or compromise his dignity, or that his olfactory nerves would be seriously offended, by acting occasionally as Master of the Ceremonies, in standing at the feeding house door, witnessing his favourites dispatch their dinner; and for such an act it would be rather hard to be stigmatized as a *dog-feeder*. For myself, I must confess and plead guilty to the charge of taking a deep interest in horses and dogs. Although I may be ridiculed for the expression of the sentiment—that mutual attachment should exist between master and hound—destroy that feeling, and we then use these animals (so identified with our recreations and pastimes, and formed by nature to be man's assistants and companions) as mere living machines, to pander to our pleasures. Justice extends to the brute creation.

A man who has once hunted his own hounds will never take the same interest in them, or derive the same gratification from their performances when handled by a huntsman. The excitement of riding to them may not be wanting, but the sport is bereft of half its charms when produced by another. The feeling with me is nearly akin to beholding a beautiful and graceful girl, whose affections I would fain believe were once bestowed on myself, dancing and conversing with another, and wholly engrossed with his attentions. Disappointment and jealousy would be aroused by witnessing such an exhibition, and at seeing those smiles directed to another, in which I had been accustomed to revel. It would be well did experience justify us in saying, " Once a lover, always a lover," and that the wife never becomes less dear than the bride; but, although the husband may not find all the perfections his excited fancy may have portrayed in the object of his choice when a lover, I still believe and hope the cases are rare in which any man, however depraved, could part with her who once loved him, as woman only can and does love, without a pang of remorse.

There is a curious fact related of the "Reign of Terror" in France, when the law of divorce was made so easy that it was a very common occurrence to find persons who had previously availed themselves of this privilege, again re-entering into those bonds with their first partners from which they had once so eagerly sought to be released. Estrangement or indifference after marriage would become more rare were persons about to take upon them that holy state, particularly women, to adopt that sage but rather antiquated piece of advice, to "eat a peck of salt with a man before she accepted him," which would take much less time than may appear likely. We eat salt in bread, butter, bacon, cheese, tongues, spiced meat, salt with eggs, cold fowl, or game for breakfast, and with all kinds of viands at dinner, so that a peck of salt may be computed to be consumed by one person in less than a twelvemonth, which is a fair time of probation before taking a man for better or for worse during the whole term of life.

"Once a huntsman, always a huntsman," is, however, strictly true of any zealous sportsman who has ever undertaken to hunt his own hounds. He becomes naturally attached to them, as they are to him, and could not see them transferred to another's control without a feeling of deep regret. Persons of kind and humane dispositions will make pets of some animals—pet dogs, pet horses, pet birds, and I once heard of a lady who made a pet of a toad! so that there is nothing extraordinary in a huntsman making darlings of his hounds. However fond of horses and hounds, or enthusiastically addicted to field sports, I never yet did say, nor do I intend to insinuate, that fox-hunting ought to be, or might be made innocently, the sole business of a man's life; but the same observation applies equally to every other pursuit which is undertaken without reference to those duties which, as rational beings and heirs of Immortality, we owe to God and our fellow-creatures. The man whose whole faculties and time are engaged in money-making—the author or poet who labours and writes for fame only—the statesman whose sole aim is ambition—the literary man who devotes his time to reading—all whose object is self-gratification, are amenable to the charge of misemploying talents committed to their keeping. The storing our minds with literary lore is most praiseworthy, if beneficial to ourselves in a moral or religious point of view, or made productive of benefit to others; but as a mere amusement, without such purposes, the bookworm may spend a life in study with much less benefit to his fellow men than a Master of Fox-hounds.

I never argued that any man should devote six days out of seven to fox-hunting; on the contrary, I think he should *not* do so, and I say the same of every other amusement and pursuit, call it by what name you please. The evil consists in the abuse, not in the moderate use of the many enjoyments and pleasures which this world affords. We may drink wine without being drunkards—eat without being gourmands—love without being sensualists—dress neatly without being dandies—read books without becoming pedantic—be sociable and entertaining without being sarcastic and backbiters—render ourselves agreeable to the fair sex without gross flattery—and ride fox-hunting I hope, and even feed our hounds after hunting, without forfeiting our dignity as gentlemen.

In fact, I am inclined to think a Master of Fox-hounds may be, if he is not always so, a very useful member of society. He may improve the breed of horses by keeping a good thorough-bred one for the use of the farmers; live on good terms with all his neighbours, which is perhaps more a matter of choice than necessity; be given to hospitality, promote the amusement of the ladies, by patronising a hunt ball or two during the winter; afford recreation to half the country, if they are disposed to partake of it; set an example of patience and forbearance when every one is determined to try his temper in the field by riding over his hounds and spoiling his sport; and last, though not least, by going with his household to church, and not permitting his horses to be dressed on a Sunday, evince his respect for religious observances. This is not written in levity, but in sober seriousness; for however simple I may be in some respects, I have never been fool enough to despise or treat lightly the ordinances of God.

He who rightly estimates the blessings bestowed upon him, health and strength, rank, wealth or power, and above all, the *mens sana in corpore sano* to enjoy them—will never be unmindful of his beneficent Creator, and will say with the poet—

"What blessings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away,
For God is paid when man receives;
T' enjoy is to obey."

He will also do well to remember that

"The boast of Heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

CHAPTER XI.

How to feed Fox-hounds after a Hard Day's Work.—Reminiscences of Hounds in bygone Days. — Quality *versus* Quantity.—Cure for the Kennel Sickness.—Healthy Food.—When a dead Horse may be given to Fox-hounds, and when to Apple Trees.—A little Romance, in which the Author, a Horse, and a young Lady play conspicuous parts.

EVERY naturalist, who has given his attention to the consideration of the subject, must be aware that all carnivorous animals require flesh of some sort to keep them in health and vigour; and although substitutes in some cases may be used, yet the natural craving after their appropriate food still remains; in fact, the digestive organs or stomachs of the carnivora do not discharge their functions regularly without it.

Now it has often occurred to me to inquire why the life of a fox-hound should be of so much shorter duration than that of other dogs, which undergo quite as much work, but subsist generally on scraps, bones, and offal? and my impression is that the difference is to be attributed to their different ways of living. Thin liquid food given to fox-hounds (without meat) has certainly, according to my ideas, the effect of weakening the digestive organs, causing also an unnatural action of the kidneys, of which every huntsman with common observation must be aware. Oatmeal porridge is, we are quite free to admit, one of the very best substitutes for animal food, which strikes one at once as being exemplified in the powerful frames of the Scotch and Irish labourers, who subsist almost entirely upon it; but the human species are not naturally or necessarily carnivorous, and it is well known that the East Indians of a certain caste never eat flesh of any kind. The inhabitants of hot climates also consume very little animal food, living chiefly on meal, fruits, and vegetables; whilst those in colder regions—as the North American Indians and Laplanders—live almost entirely on flesh. It is very clear, therefore, that the climate under which human beings are located is a great regulator of their diet, and we all experience this effect by change of seasons in this country. The smoking sirloin of beef which excites our appetite at Christmas would be turned from almost with loathing in the dog-days, when a cold fore quarter of lamb, with salad, is a much more appropriate and inviting dish.

By the same rule we may be guided in feeding hounds, which during the summer or idle months require no animal food at all, and then their meat should be given cold, and mixed up thin; but a total change is necessary when the hounds are working hard in the winter season. The broth ought to be boiling hot in the copper when the hunting pack return to the kennel on a cold chilly night, wet and draggled, through muddy lanes or splashing roads. It is then they require warm food and warm lodgings, and plenty of meat added to their meal. The furnace of the animal frame then requires fuel to keep up the required animal heat; but it must be added cautiously, not all at once, when much exhaustion has ensued from severe work. We never gave our hunters a manger full of corn when they first returned from hunting to the stable, or any corn whatever, until an hour after they had swallowed a bucket-full of thick gruel, and eaten some hay; and we treated our hounds in a similar manner after a hard or long day, by feeding them twice, first sparingly, and two hours after more bountifully; and every man accustomed to the severe exercise and long abstinence attending on field sports must know that he could relish a glass of sherry and a biscuit when he could not at once sit down to discuss a good dinner; and I rather suspect a glass of hot brandy and water would be more grateful to him, when wet to the skin, and his teeth chattering with cold, on a January evening, than a jug of iced buttermilk.

It is a rule worth observing, to feed horses and dogs according to their work, but never to overload their stomachs at any one meal, and especially not with fluids; and on one point I am thoroughly convinced, that the same quantity of food divided into two feedings, morning and evening, will keep dogs in a better and more healthy condition than when given at once, which is the general custom in kennels of fox-hounds. This was, at any rate, the invariable custom with my own hounds, winter and summer, throughout the year; and the effect of this treatment was manifest in their superior powers of enduring fatigue, and living to a greater age, with less diminished strength, than those in other establishments; and the last fox-hound I ever possessed, which, being a great favourite, was reserved and sent to a neighbour, ran at the head of his fast pack when in her eighth season. A little consideration of our own particular feelings will convince us how the case must stand with animals. At our accustomed dinner hour we experience certain irritating or gnawing sensations about the region of the stomach, which increase very soon to irritability of temper in some individuals, should the fish and soup not be placed on the table within half-an hour after the appointed time; but should any unforeseen event interpose, to prevent our eating at all until two or three more hours had elapsed, what would be our feelings then? Those of a sinking and debilitating nature, and even an indifference to food.

For breakfast the slightest repast is with many men sufficient, and the body, being refreshed by a good night's rest, is in a state to undergo fatigue, without a great amount of nourishment or food to feed the furnace; but after a day's exercise or work, the frame requires sustenance and support of a more substantial kind—the dinner, in short, being the great meal of the day. With this idea, I began feeding my hounds late in the day during the hunting season, and my argument ran thus:—My hounds, being accustomed to dine at a late hour, will not begin to feel lear when they find their second or third fox at two or three o'clock, the chances being in favour of their having made a breakfast off their first, and so they would go comfortably on, running until dark, without any qualms or queerishness about their stomachs, or thinking about their dinner, which I have a notion dogs do think about, although perhaps not quite so much as their masters. Be that as it may, the experiment answered my expectations, and my hounds would run till midnight without failing or flagging.

In our country, and under our circumstances, two hard days awaited us in almost every week throughout the season, when we had to travel the hounds over night (a van being useless in our by-roads), and left off hunting seldom under twenty miles from home, and sometimes thirty. On those days the hounds rarely returned to the home kennels until nine o'clock at night. The temporary kennel, from which we hunted our *Leicestershire Country*, was distant fourteen miles from home, to which the hounds and horses travelled the evening previous to hunting. We had then from four to ten miles further to go to our places of meeting the following morning, and it so happened that our foxes seldom ran homewards, the main earths lying in the other direction, so that, at the close of each day, we had twenty miles—never less—to travel through by-lanes before the hounds could get their dinner. This work for a continuance throughout the season (our pack being so short that the same hounds often hunted three days a week), it may easily be imagined, was very severe; and my impression is that no pack of the present day, under the present treatment, would or could undergo this wear and tear of frame and constitution without exhibiting the appearance of scarecrows. To our hounds, of course, good legs and feet were as necessary (and these they possessed in perfection) as stoutness of limb and frame and good constitution, and for their performances in the field there are many still living in the old country who can bear testimony to the sport afforded for nearly thirty years by the now old Squire and his quondam pack. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

The fashion now is to keep a large body of hounds, which are fed lightly (nearly half-starved), to run a burst in the morning, but they have not stamina to cope with a stout afternoon fox. A few years since, a gentleman, who kept a very large establishment of horses and hounds, from ill-health resigned part of his outlying country, and reduced his pack very considerably, intending to hunt only two or three days a-week; but it so happened that his neighbour resigned also soon afterwards, leaving his country unoccupied. Under these circumstances, he was solicited to draw some of the best coverts to prevent the foxes being destroyed; to which he consented, hunting as before, four days a-week, with half the usual complement of hounds—sixteen couples being all he could muster at the place of meeting; but the result was the very best season's sport he had ever had. The hounds were highly fed to keep them up to the mark, and had never shown themselves to such advantage before. Although "the more the merrier," the *few* make the better cheer, and a large body of hounds in the field is truly a very useless incumbrance, often marring instead of making sport. I had as much fun when, as a lad, I could muster only eight couples at the covert side, as I had in after-life when accompanied by eighteen.

The usual hour of feeding hounds in most kennels now being about eleven o'clock, they will naturally be sharp-set before hunting the following morning, and, in my opinion, anything but in a fit state to endure severe work; and this long abstinence, concluding they are not fed till six o'clock the same evening, cannot fail to be prejudicial to the health and constitutions of fox-hounds, and one of the principal causes of their premature decline. Thin oatmeal porridge is of easy digestion for the stomach of a dog, without the addition of animal food, when hard work is before him; and although all animals of prey—lions, tigers, wolves, foxes, and wild dogs—feed only once in the twenty-four hours, yet, as they live entirely upon flesh and bones, their food requires some time for digestion, and they generally remain in a quiescent state during the whole day. This rule, therefore, cannot be applicable to dogs in an artificial state, particularly when their frames are subjected to such protracted exertions; and I am quite satisfied, from practical experience, that every sporting dog during the season should be fed twice a-day, morning and evening, and on the very best and strongest food, mixed up quite thick; *quality*, not *quantity*, being of paramount importance.

To hounds which become *kennel-sick*, losing their condition, and showing symptoms of attenuation and decay, a few weeks' exemption from the kennel dietary, if allowed to run at large and eat raw meat and bones, induces perfect renovation of health and vigour, which at once, I think, proves that the system I advocate in feeding is most natural and conducive to longevity in the canine species; and I never shall think otherwise of the thin washy food generally given to fox-hounds, but as weakening to their digestive organs, and therefore irreconcilable with a vigorous state of body. This system is also quite the reverse of economical. A larger body of hounds is kept at an unnecessary expense, and fed so badly that they are unequal to hunt more than two (if so many) days in the week; whereas, a third less in number, if properly fed, would not only do more work, but do it in far superior style.

In the generality of kennels it is too much the practice to take all fish that comes to the net, or all horses, dead or alive, diseased or starved, which are brought for hounds, the skins being the huntsman's perquisites. The soup made from a horse that has died of disease must be very heating, and something more—totally unfit for fox-hounds; and I have occasionally been nearly knocked down by the stench arising from some boiling houses. This nuisance should not be tolerated in any well-conducted establishment, where a large paddock ought to be appropriated to the horses intended for the kennel, in which they might be kept and fed some few weeks before being killed. This plan was adopted by the late Lord Ducie (than whom a better judge of hounds or hunting never existed), and no establishment is complete without it. There can be no objection to horses which have been killed from accidents; but the flesh of those which have died from disease should never be given to fox-hounds.

In the autumn, when farming operations have generally ceased, and the price, on the advent of winter, warns small horse-keepers of the value of hay, animals, old, lame, and nearly useless, of the genus equine, may be readily bought up, and if not absolutely fattened, got into tolerable condition for the kennel, and it is far better to give a guinea or twenty-five shillings for one of this description, which may put on flesh, than twelve shillings for a bag of bones, or a "stiff 'un," as my feeder used to call a dead horse, rolled out of a farmer's cart, as round as a beer barrel and tight as a drum. Such we were obliged to take in sometimes, but they were consigned to the orchard to help the growth of the apples. Old ladies' pet carriage-horses, as fat and sleek as their coachman, would occasionally arrive, with "Missus's compliments to the young Squire," to entreat that the poor creatures (a misnomer) might be put out of their *misery* (looking quite happy), which was quickly done by a rifle ball being sent through their brain, when they fell dead instantaneously. Upon one occasion, however, a young lady's horse was sent by her papa with similar instructions, because he was a little touched in the wind; and in this case

I not only ventured to disobey orders, but kept her pet, cured him, restored him to her again, and received, as the reward of my kindness, her own hand in return, which has proved the greatest blessing ever bestowed on Scrutator.

CHAPTER XII.

The Sportsman's Library.—A practical Lesson on the Evils of Idleness. — Salutary discipline for Riotous Dogs. — The Author's Apology for being Dogmatical on Dogs.—When Whelps should be turned out of the Nursery.—The Mysteries of Barley Meal.—Cure for the Red Mange.

Every sportsman ought to have in his library Lawrence and Nimrod on Horses, with Beckford and Delmè Radcliffe on Hounds. He will of course patronise the "Sporting Review" and "Bailey's Magazine" also, from whose pages he may derive both information and instruction.

It will, I dare say, appear very strange in this enlightened age, when so much has been written on the management of hounds, and with a class of huntsmen supposed to know everything about kennel and field practice, that ignorance and obstinacy should still prevail to an alarming extent in some establishments, proving, as I have said, the necessity of the Master knowing his business as well or better than his man. I have been told that in one kennel last summer no fewer than fourteen hounds were worried and torn to pieces by fighting among themselves. But there is little cause for astonishment at such a loss, when it appears that these hounds, after the season is over, are allowed to remain for weeks together without proper and sufficient exercise. They are merely walked out for half an hour or so in the morning, and again after feeding in the afternoon. The pack was represented to be extremely riotous and unsteady, flashing away from their own game when in full chase, on deer, hares, or any other scent they might cross; and I conclude the truth of the matter is this, that the huntsman is actually afraid to take them out to exercise with the horses after the hunting season, for fear of their breaking away from him; in fact, I was told they committed every kind of excess, worrying sheep, running sheep-dogs, and almost every living animal they caught sight of.

Idleness is the parent of vice in the canine as well as in the human species, and here is a strong exemplification of it—a fine pack of fox-hounds ruined by ignorance or want of energy in their huntsman. They were described to me as a dashing, high-spirited lot of hounds, and when they did hold to their fox, seldom failing to catch him; all they required was a firm, determined master, who would keep them out of the kennel from sunrise until sunset, every day in the week, until they had learnt better manners. Rest to such dare-devils is ruin. Within one month I would have engaged to make these madcaps do anything I told them (except speak), pass by every covert in the country without attempting to break into it, and, confirmed in vice as they were, draw through riots of all kinds without a tongue being heard. Patience and perseverance would accomplish this, although in such a case we should have to use a little whipcord at first starting. I should have taken them out in the morning from five o'clock until nine, putting the worst in couples together—not a quiet hound with a vicious one, lest Jack's thong should fall on the innocent; trot them briskly along, and when they return to the kennel give them a little lap for breakfast. At ten o'clock take them out again on foot into villages and farm-yards, where they might see cur dogs and sheep, one whipper-in being in advance, and the other some distance behind. Keep them out until one o'clock; rest for an hour, out again with the horses for three or four hours. Feed at seven in the evening, and walk them again from eight to nine, and before leaving them for the night, put away by themselves the most quarrelsome. Pursue this plan for a week to begin with, when the second exercise with the horses may be dispensed with.

As a general rule in my own kennel, our hounds were seldom permitted to remain in the lodging-room during the summer, except at the breakfast and dinner hours, and always fed in the evening, because this practice is so necessary to keep fox-hounds in health and condition, and prevent them tearing each other to pieces through idleness. I have said that to a good huntsman who does his duty, the summer is as busy a time as the hunting-season, and I mean it. There is no operation or work connected with the kennel, stable, or field which I have not performed with my own hand, from the dressing of a horse to the mowing of a crop of grass; and this knowledge I have ever found useful to me, because if I saw any man using an implement in his hand unskilfully, or doing his work carelessly, I could at once show him how it ought to be done. The reflection is often cast by servants on their masters when finding fault, "What does he know about it? I should like to see him doing it!"

To a country gentleman, therefore, who is fond of hunting and farming, *practical* knowledge is ever serviceable, unless he is content to yield to the dictation of his huntsman, groom, or bailiff. Servants will always respect those masters who know better than themselves; and there is one thing I never could endure—to be thought a fool, even by a ploughboy. When, therefore, I lay down rules for kennel management, they are the result of my own experience, which, as long as I remained a Master of Fox-hounds, were rigidly enforced; and I am vain enough to think no man ever possessed a better pack than myself. Although keeping a kennel-huntsman or whipper-in (whose business was confined entirely to the kennel), and feeder also, I generally took the hounds with me during the summer over the farm, or in excursions about the country when I had no other engagements, often performing the part of dog-feeder also. Bad taste, no doubt; still I thought by feeding them they became more attached to me; in short, they were petted, though not spoilt, and many of my favourites had nicknames to which they answered as well as to their common ones. So much I have written to show that I have had some little practical experience, and have served a rather long apprenticeship in that business which I profess to teach to others, without intending to imply that every M.F.H. should imitate my example, although he may safely follow my precepts. The observations made are addressed to the uninitiated, who are not above receiving hints, not to old professors of the science, who probably know more than myself.

I was asked a short time ago my opinion about some puppies of four months old (which had been brought up in a yard) with large, wide feet, like those of a duck, and my advice was to turn them out of it immediately, as the only chance of rectifying the deformity. The experiment of bringing up fox-hound puppies in a large yard has been often tried, and has as often failed, and from this failure has arisen the necessity of sending them out to walks in the country. They will grow and become fat in confinement, but their limbs and feet invariably suffer; they also become shy and foolish, and will bear no comparison with those who have roughed it, even at poor quarters, as to hardihood and symmetry of form. No puppies should be kept in confinement after they are three months old, and my general practice was to send them from the kennels much earlier.

As soon as whelps can eat they should have either milk or thin lap, made from boiled oatmeal or scalded barley-meal, and broth of some sort mixed with it. Oatmeal requires boiling for an hour, and is not only better but cheaper food for dogs of all kinds than barley-meal; but as the latter is more generally used for setters, spaniels, and pointers, I will point out how Masters may ascertain whether this meal has been properly prepared or not, the manner in which it should be scalded being of the first importance. The dry meal should be placed in a bucket (or pan, where two or three dogs only are to be fed) and *boiling water* poured upon it—*warm* water will have no effect—stirring it the while, and then left to stand, *covered over*, for at least half an hour before it is used, after which it may be broken up and reduced to a proper consistency with skim milk or broth, mixed with meat. Now any Master may easily discover whether the barley-meal has been duly prepared or not by this test: if properly scalded it will be of a *dark* colour, sticky, and difficult to mix up; but if *warm* water only has been used, the meal will be of a light colour and of little consistency; and as "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," great attention must be paid to this particular point, or a double quantity will be used, and the dogs suffer as well as the Master's pocket.

In kennels of fox-hounds barley-meal is seldom used now-a-days, but harriers are still fed upon it; and where a boiler is used, the barley-meal should be poured by hand into the boiling water, being well stirred all the time—the fire then removed, and the pudding allowed to stand half-an-hour in the copper before it is taken out and placed in the pudding-troughs. I have been rather prosy and particular on these points, from the questions so often asked by masters of setters, pointers, and other dogs, how their food should be cooked, and this explanation will, I hope, suffice. But if they are too fastidious to see these directions attended to by their servants, the consequence will be that their dogs will still continue thin and out of condition as heretofore. "The master's eye makes the horse fat;" and it is of course the same with his dog.

Upon the principle that "children and chicken should always be picking," whelps require feeding at least three times a-day—morning, noon, and night; but they are not to be crammed with a quantity of food at one meal, which will have the effect of making them pot-bellied—excessive repletion being particularly injurious to young animals of every genus and species. Puppies also require a constant change of straw, and when a month or six weeks old should be put out into the air, in a sunny situation, protected from the north and east winds; and when the weather is cold or frosty, they should be kept warm during the night, and not let out too early in the morning.

To destroy the little white lice with which whelps are generally tormented, a simple dressing of linseed-oil and sulphur will be sufficient, which may be repeated, if necessary, without any injurious effects to the mother or her offspring; but tobacco water, and other such noxious remedies, should never be used for the purpose.

Many inquiries have been made as to the treatment of what is considered a new kind of mange, but in my opinion nothing more or less than the *red mange*, which is so difficult to cure. This disorder is very distinct from the common eruption so frequent in dogs, and of a most inflammatory character, although not contagious, unless dogs are penned up very closely together. I possessed two fox-hounds once, which were sent to me as incurable; and they were most miserable animals when brought to my kennel, with scarcely any hair on their bodies, and altogether in a most disgusting state, covered all over with fiery eruptions, and with pustules discharging offensive matter. One of these hounds, a dog named Gamboy (of Mr. Ward's blood, and coming direct from his kennel), I cured so effectually within a few months, that he never broke out in a similar manner again, and was, to the day of his death, one of the cleanest hounds in the pack. The other (his sister), named Grievous, would occasionally break out into a rash at the spring of the year, which was easily checked by proper remedies and treatment; for without the latter—attention to feeding and diet—all the dressings ever used will not effect a permanent cure.

As in cases of this kind the dog's whole system is in a state of irritation, *fiery* dressings will only add fuel to the fire. The first step is to bleed in the jugular vein with a good-sized lancet, the hair having been first cut away with a pair of scissors, and then a string tied round the neck to raise the vein. The quantity of blood to be extracted must depend upon the size and condition of the animal, whether lean or fat; from a full-grown fox-hound half a pint, but not beyond eight ounces, may be taken. At night he should have three or four grains of calomel, mixed with ten grains of jalap, and the next morning half an ounce of Epsom salts dissolved in warm broth or whey. The same day, dress him over with rape oil, thickened with plain yellow sulphur, but *no turpentine,* or any other ingredient. As an alterative, half a teaspoonful of Ethiop's mineral, and half of cream of tartar, should be given, mixed in butter or lard, every alternate night (or every night if the case is a bad one) for ten days. During this period the dog should be fed accordingly—whey or buttermilk for breakfast, and well-boiled oatmeal in the evening, with broth, but very little meat.

Whey is one of the best, if not the very best, purifiers to give in such cases, with an hour's exercise afterwards. At the expiration of ten days, if the eruption has not disappeared, renew the dressing with a *small* quantity of spirits of turpentine—one part to three of oil.

After the dog has been washed clean from the first dressing, with warm soap and water, and rubbed thoroughly dry, give another dose of calomel and jalap at night, and salts in the morning, and the alterative as before, but no more bleeding. Continue this treatment for ten days longer, due attention being paid to diet, and if these directions are properly carried out, with air and exercise, clean straw, and a dry lodging, I have little doubt of an effectual cure, unless the disease is hereditary. Except, however, under the immediate supervision of the Master, I have no expectation that these instructions will be observed by keepers generally, to whose tender mercies pointers, setters, and spaniels are too often entirely abandoned.

CHAPTER XIII.

How to select young Hounds.—The great Criterion of judicious Breeding.—Necessity for rounding the Ears of Fox-hounds.—Rules to be observed in selecting Drafts.—Mr. Warde's Hounds.—Cub-hunting, and one of its necessary consequences.—Pursuing the Buck under the Eye of Diana.—Nothing New under the Sun.

The two first considerations which should influence every Master of Fox-hounds in selecting his draft when the young hounds return to kennel, are the fineness of nose and the stoutness of their parents; in fact, the best bred would claim my attention before the best looking, supposing, of course, that the former possessed the requisites of good legs and feet, with powerful frames to stand wear and tear. The progeny of untried mothers, that is, their first litter, however handsome, should be viewed rather with suspicion than with that favour which is too generally bestowed on good looks.

They may be put forward on trial with this understanding, that they are not to be depended upon until after the second season. But those bred from well-tried sires and dams may be safely calculated upon to add strength to the pack, and not fail when most needed in their third season.

Judgment in breeding fox-hounds, as well as in breeding cattle and sheep, is of the very first importance, and from the want of this it is that a pack of fox-hounds suffers when taken in hand by a young huntsman and inexperienced Master. Appearances to them are too often the first consideration, and to these are sacrificed the other sterling qualities upon which good sport most materially depends. The great criterion of judicious breeding is seen by the number of *three-seasoned hounds.* If nearly all have stood the test thus far (barring accidents), it is a sure proof of the breeder's judgment; if the reverse is the case, there is great fault somewhere. In many large kennels the young hounds are all brought in about the same time, and the rejected sent away immediately the first selection has been made by the Master; and this is the wisest plan to adopt under the circumstances, or to separate them into two divisions, for the larger the number crowded into one kennel, the more virulent will be the distemper.

My practice was to keep the best bred and most promising puppies at their walks as long as possible, until the hunting season was past, when more attention could be paid to them. The operation of rounding their ears should never be performed until the young hounds have recovered entirely from the effects of distemper, as the loss of blood is sometimes excessive; and I wish we could dispense with this cruel practice altogether; yet I know not how it can be avoided with fox-hounds, whose ears, if permitted to remain as nature formed them, would be torn and scratched most severely in thick coverts, where their work first commences. It is a different thing with harriers, which draw in the open field for their game, and have few opportunities of scratching their ears and faces in a stiff blackthorn thicket. The natural resort of the fox is in large woodlands or gorse coverts, and to these he will hold, until forced by his pursuers to face the open country; and even then, it is with the intention of gaining some other strong tangled thicket or brake, from which he is again compelled to fly, or yield his life. *Militat in sylvis catulus* is strictly applicable to a young fox-hound; and to prepare him for this warfare with briers and thorns, we are obliged to apply the rounding irons; and I know not how hemorrhage can be prevented without adding to his suffering by using the cautery. By sponging their heads and ears with cold water (our general practice) the flow of blood will be checked; but the application of styptics to the points of the ear would be attended with more difficulty than benefit, as a young fox-hound, when smarting with pain, is a most fractious subject to deal with—in fact, with the exception of bulldogs and mastiffs, no dog possesses more courage.

Many a huntsman, to give their pack a smarter appearance, round the ears too closely, for which there is no necessity, and additional pain is thereby inflicted, with a greater loss of blood. For any reasonable purpose, it is quite sufficient to cut off the tip only, unless there is a superabundance of flap. Fox-hound puppies have to undergo three painful operations before they are considered fit to be added to the pack,—the removal of their dew-claws, when a few days old, by a sharp pair of scissors—branding on the side with a hot iron mark before they are sent to walk—and afterwards rounding. In branding, the iron ought never to be used too hot, and some fresh lard, ready at hand, should be applied the moment the mark is removed from the side, which will assuage the pain, and induce the wound to heal more readily.

The number of young hounds to be put forward as the entry for the season must depend on the strength of the pack, whether intended to hunt three or four days a week; but when there is a promising lot of young hounds, clever and well-bred, it is always the wisest plan to keep an extra number, as two seasons in succession are seldom equally fortunate in this respect. For three days a week I should put forward from ten to twelve couples of young hounds, when over the distemper; and for four days, from fourteen to eighteen couples. These should be worked hard through the cub hunting, with the brood bitches and others which require it, and the second draft made in October. My usual number of brood bitches was about seven couples, from which I commenced breeding after the first week in November, when they were generally laid aside for that purpose. After leaving the bitch-house, they were, however, again hunted a few times, to keep them in exercise, until they showed symptoms of being in whelp, my object being to get as many puppies as possible born in February, the early bred always proving the strongest. Allowing four whelps to each dam, I had then about twenty-eight couples to send out to walk; but any of these failing, recourse was had to the most promising young bitches to supply the deficiency. The number of puppies bred in many large hunting establishments is excessive, amounting sometimes to nearly a hundred couples; but as this practice is a great benefit to the generality of small packs in want of draft hounds, these large hound-owners can indulge their fancies in this respect without let or hindrance, and do some service to their less fortunate brother Masters.

The renowned John Warde, as far as my recollection serves me, bred fewer hounds, according to the strength of his pack (hunting four days a week), than any Master in his time; but, with judgment and experience, the young hounds put forward seldom went amiss. His old huntsman told me that his master often considered a day and a night before finally determining on his match-making, but that his judgment seldom failed either in form or good qualities. It was the fashion to abuse Mr. Warde's hounds, as large, heavy, lumbering animals, with huge heads and coarse neck-cloths; and it is so far true that some of the dogs were Brobdignags in proportions. A hound called Mimic I well remember, of height and power sufficient to draw a small basket-carriage; yet withal, he was neither leggy nor throaty, but one of the cleverest hounds, in every respect, that I have ever seen. Some of Mr. Warde's bitches, also, were perfect models of symmetry—clean in their necks, straight on their legs, and powerful in their frames; and although I have looked over hundreds and thousands of fox-hounds since that period, the names and forms of some bitches I then noticed in his kennel have been indelibly impressed upon my recollection, and I have never met with any since which could compete with them. That such hounds as Mimic were ill adapted to a flinty country, like the Craven, admits of no question; but Mr. Warde was partial to a large sort of fox-hound, and his lady pack could go well in any country. It was said (with what truth I know not) that his hunting pack partook of an early breakfast before appearing at the covert side, to equalise their pace with their master's, who then rode somewhere about twenty stone! Be that as it may, the palmy days of John Warde in the Craven country will never be forgotten by those who partook of the festivities of that period, when good sport and good fellowship, with unbounded hospitality, so generally prevailed.

As to the size and colour of his pack, every

Master will follow the bent of his own inclination. Power has little to do with height, and a good hound or a good horse may be of any colour. Black and white, with tanned muzzles, and badger-pied, were my favourites; but lighter-coloured hounds look more brilliant in the field, although I do not think they are so hardy in their constitutions.

It was my practice to commence cub-hunting about the first week in August, at early dawn, which enabled us to finish our morning's work by eight or nine o'clock. Dressing by candle-light is not an over-agreeable occupation; yet, as huntsman to my own pack, I was perforce obliged to take the rough and the smooth together.

> "Early to bed and early to rise,
> Is the way to be healthy, wealthy, and wise."

But getting up in the middle of the night was not much to my taste, although, when the weather is hot, it is a necessary duty in a huntsman at the beginning of cub-hunting. After the first week, however, there is no necessity for going out so very early, although the scent lies better when the dew is on the ground, and the hounds suffer less from heat.

Hunting in the evening is no recent discocovery; for we find, in the reigns of Charles and James the Second, the time of meeting to hunt the buck commenced at four o'clock in the afternoon; and the custom then was for the sportsmen to take a light repast at two o'clock, and have their dinner at the most fashionable hour of the present day.

It has been said, perhaps with more truth than we are generally inclined to believe in this enlightened era, that "there is nothing new under the sun." We plume ourselves on being in advance of every age or generation of mankind which has preceded us in scientific knowledge; and no doubt the steam-engine and telegraphic wire are something to boast of; but we are yet in the dark as to the power applied in raising the Pyramids of Egypt, the enormous blocks of stone used in Solomon's Temple, and the Druidical remains at Stonehenge. To what limits human knowledge is permitted to extend we know not, but boundaries there are to man's inventive faculties, as well as to the waves of the sea—"Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further." In some things the ancients surpassed us, in others we have surpassed them. *Nemo est ab omni parte beatus* may be applied to nations as well as to individuals.

We do not learn, however, that they knew much about fox-hunting, although the pursuit of the stag was of very early origin, as we are told "Esau went to the field to hunt for venison."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Expenses of a Hunting Establishment.—Arithmetic applied to Horses and Hounds.—The old Grey-hound Fox.—A little bit of a Frolic.—Young Blood, and how to treat it.—A few Remarks on Practical Knowledge.—The proper Number of Hounds in a Pack.—Some Sanitary Considerations with respect to Food and Warmth.—Preparations for Cub-hunting.—How to test the Condition of a Fox-hound.—Qualities of Setters and Pointers crossed with the Fox-hound.—The Battue System.—The Day's Work of a Setter and Fox-hound compared.—Distinctive Features of the Rough and Smooth Haired Hound.—The Kennels at Belvoir and Cottesmere thirty years ago.—Lord Fitzwilliam's Pack.

THE expenses of a hunting establishment will vary according to country, and the rank held by the Master; but I cannot forbear again remarking that the lavish expenditure in these times debars country gentlemen of moderate income from aspiring to that position; and although agreeing "that what is worth doing at all should be well done," yet fox-hunting establishments are now conducted on a scale far beyond moderation or expediency.

The number of hounds generally kept is not only excessive, but that very excess prevents their being used so often in the field as they ought to be. From forty to fifty couples are quite sufficient to hunt four days a week, as the hunting pack need not exceed eighteen or twenty couples, and they must undergo unusually severe work to render them unfit to hunt two days a week during the season. The same observation will apply to horses, as a hunter which cannot go two days a week, or three a fortnight, has no business in a hunting establishment. Style and pace, however, being the chief consideration now-a-days, it would be vain to expect young and fast men to listen to the voice of experience, although for their information I will add that in a three-days-a-week provincial country I found ten horses sufficient for myself and two whippers-in, even in my fast days, and the country we hunted was a severe one for men, hounds, and horses.

Having ventured to express an opinion that foxes in those times were not only superior, but of a different breed to those now in circulation through the majority of hunting countries, I was glad to find, from a whipper-in who had been a season in Scotland, that there are some specimens of the old greyhound fox to be found there, which could run before a fast pack of hounds for three or four hours, and beat them at last; and to show how extensively the little red fox has been dispersed over Great Britain, he informed me that in one part of their hunting country they met with many of this species which had been imported from France, and turned down by a late Master of the hounds, and they would scarcely run at all, dodging about (to use his own expression) like rabbits.

He also gave me an instance of the wild pranks sometimes played by young fox-hounds. They were out at exercise one day, before regular business commenced, with these juveniles, when the huntsman's horse (a young one also) turned restive, threw him, and then galloped away. The young hounds, ripe for mischief, immediately gave chase, and ran their master's horse full cry for three or four miles, until they were all stopped together in a village. But the most extraordinary part of the story is that not a hound was kicked or injured by the horse. After this little *divertissement*, it is almost needless to state that the youthful hopes of the family, or pack, became exceedingly fractious, and required a considerable outlay of whipcord on their carcasses; in short, from that time, they were ever on the look-out for an escapade, and even after being entered at fox, would break away from the huntsman for any covert they took a fancy to, and, by Jack's account, they kicked up the devil's own row in some gentleman's park before he and the other whip could get at them; but when they did catch these young vagabonds, they were well served out by Jack and Tom.

It may be gathered from this that well-bred fox-hounds are composed of very excitable materials, or high mettle, which, when brought to bear on their legitimate chase, is of the very first importance. The young hounds mentioned as having run the huntsman's horse were an unentered draft from Lord Fitzwilliam's kennel. The most riotous puppies generally make the best hounds when steadied by work, and on that account should never be allowed rest or respite until that object is accomplished. There is, however, as I have before mentioned, a great want of attention to this practice in large establishments, where the young hounds, when sent in from their walks, are kept penned up within the kennel walls for weeks together, without air or exercise. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that when first let loose they should run after the first object they catch sight of. Highly bred and highly fed, their exuberant spirits must find vent somewhere; but if taken out to exercise in couples, from the day of entering the kennel, they would never think of running donkeys and sheep-dogs. I might, however, as well attempt to turn the kennel upside down as to turn an old huntsman from his old practice of keeping young hounds stewed up in their prison house until the finest are destroyed by distemper year after year, although it must be obvious that the treatment I recommend is most rational, but I believe it will never be adopted unless the Master interferes. There is a great drawback where fox-hunting countries are so continually changing hands, in the Master possessing this title only nominally, particularly if young in years or knowledge of the business, and he dare not interfere with the huntsman. Want of experience in such matters keeps him silent, and it is not unusual to find the groom as much master in the stable as the huntsman is in the kennel.

Now, without in the least wishing to disparage these high functionaries, or detract from their merit, I hold it highly necessary for a Master of fox-hounds, or the owner of a good stud of horses, to know something more about their treatment than he can learn from a huntsman or a groom, and to devote a spare hour occasionally to the perusal of some of those numerous works which have been written on those subjects. Knowledge is power; and *theoretical* knowledge has many advantages, although *practical* has more. But to return to my subject at the beginning of this chapter, I will give *verbatim* a quotation from Mr. Delme Radcliffe's work on Hunting, as to the number of the pack in the field :—

"Taking one of the most complete, if not the most perfect in the whole world for an example of what is right, you will find it is *oftener with less* than with more than eighteen couples that Lord Forrester and Mr. Goosey thread the Vale of Belvoir."

And the practice of taking a large body of hounds to hunt the fox is thus censured even by Somerville in his day :—

"That numerous pack, that crowded state,
With which the vain profusion of the great
Covers the lawn, and shakes the trembling copse—

. . . .

Pompous incumbrance! a magnificence
Useless, vexatious! for the wily fox,
Safe in the increasing number of his foes,
Kens well the great advantage, shrinks behind,

> And slily creeps through the same beaten track,
> And hunts them step by step, their views escaped,
> With inward ecstasy, the panting throng
> In their own footsteps puzzled, foiled, and lost."

My doctrine, therefore, as to sixteen or eighteen couples being ample to kill any fox, backed by these authorities (and Beckford, I believe, also), is clearly no novelty, although my practice in this respect resulted from actual observation and experience; for having when in my teens commenced hunting the fox with a lot of hounds—under twelve couples for my first season—the good luck attending my *début* in the field with this short complement taught me one great and necessary lesson in fox-hunting, which was my guide in after years—*that success does not depend on numbers.* As to feeding my hounds twice after a hard day's work, I can adduce authority for that also, from "The Noble Science," to show that others agree with me in thinking that hounds ought not to be fed at once, by which some are sent gorged, whilst others are sent empty, to bed, just to suit an idle huntsman's convenience, or save him a little extra trouble. Mr. Delme Radcliffe thus expresses himself on the subject:—

"The feeding of hounds, as regards their condition, is one of the most essential proofs of a huntsman's skill in the kennel. To preserve that even state throughout the pack so desirable, he must be well acquainted with the appetite of every hound. While some will feed with a voracity not exceeded by animal kind, others will require enticing to their food. Delicate hounds may generally be tempted with a little additional flesh, and with the thickest and best of the trough, but they require to be watched, and *must not be fed all at once,* but allowed to decline or return to their food according to inclination." Now, as "The Noble Science" was published some sixteen years after I had become a Master of Fox-hounds, it is evident I could not have taken a leaf out of this book on which to found my system of treating hounds; but it is a great satisfaction to find so clever and experienced a Master corroborating my doctrine in this respect.

On the subject of warmth also we coincide, although not as to the general use of the warm-bath. "It is absurd to suppose that hounds will be more hardy and less liable to the effects of bad weather if kept cold in kennel; the warmer and more comfortable they are kept within doors the better they can battle with the elements. They huddle all together on their litter, courting by every means in their power the warmth by which all nature is revived and nourished. No kennel is perfect without the means of warm ventilation, which may easily be supplied by flues, where the copper of the boiling-house is contiguous, as it generally is, to the lodging-houses."

A month previous to cub-hunting, the young hounds should be prepared for their work by long exercise, and trotting briskly along with the horses over turf or through grassy lanes, which may be increased to a gallop at last when an opportunity occurs for stretching their limbs over open downs, by which you will be enabled to judge also of their speed and style of going; but it must be borne in mind that getting hounds as well as horses into condition is a gradual process, from walking to trotting, and last of all galloping. Many huntsmen, however, commence without any such preliminary training, *working* their hounds into condition, rather than take the trouble to get them into condition to work, and from this negligence the hounds suffer very severely sometimes in their first day's hunting, particularly should the weather be hot and the ground hard, which is generally the case during the month of August and beginning of September.

Cub-hunting is, in my opinion, the most trying period in the whole hunting season to a pack of fox-hounds, when more toes are sprung or let down than in any other month of the year. The meuses or tracks in woodlands have also to be broken through at the expense of severe laceration to the hounds employed in this service. A blackthorn sticking in one's knee or leg does not cause a very agreeable sensation at any time, although to a sportsman in hard condition it occasions little inconvenience, and may be easily extracted, but in fat or flabby flesh this little thorn would create a considerable amount of inflammation; and so it is with hounds, if properly prepared they will suffer little from scratches of briars or pricks of thorns. The condition of a fox-hound may be tested by a short, smart gallop over the turf, when if, on being pulled up, his mouth shuts almost immediately, he may be considered very near the mark; but if, on the contrary, his tongue continues hanging out, he is not fit to go or work. At the commencement of cub-hunting I like to see the frame well covered with sound hard flesh, and the muscles full, which are quite consistent with good condition, and hounds will thus maintain their strength and power little inpaired through the season; whereas those hurried into work without proper preparation, or reduced too low by their feeding, soon become skeletons only; and it is a just observation made by Beckford, that "a half-starved hound is no match for an afternoon fox."

I was much struck some little time since by the appearance of a very handsome well-bred setter belonging to a genuine sportsman, and formerly a keen fox-hunter, and observing "Three days a week would not be too much for such a dog," his reply was, "Five days a week are barely sufficient to keep him in good hunting order; with less, he would become ungovernable." Since then I have had an opportunity of deciding that his opinion of his dog's capabilities was not in the least overrated. He is a strong, bony, muscular animal, with fine head and neck, good shoulders, and straight legs, and no day is too long for him. The pace at which he ranges the field, and the manner in which he clears a gate or a fence, are quite in fox-hound style; in fact, I cannot help thinking there must have been a cross with the fox-hound in some of his progenitors. This setter, when I first saw him, had been at work for more than two months, averaging four days a week, from nine in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon, beating over a rough, hilly country, and exhibited the *ne plus ultra* of condition.

Some years ago, I remember two pointers belonging to the late Sir Francis Burdett (their sire one of John Warde's fox-hounds) over which I have often shot, and these were equally hard and indomitable, requiring a vast amount of work to be kept steady to their game. Pointers with this cross, although most difficult to break at first, are invaluable afterwards for wild shooting, where birds and game are not over-plentiful, although in strictly preserved ground, where partridges are as numerous as poultry in a farm-yard, a slow, toddling old Spanish pointer is more in keeping with this battue system; but a genuine sportsman repudiates such wholesale butchery. To render sport intelligible to a sportsman, there must be some excitement in the pursuit, an interest in the working of his dogs, and a little uncertainty as to the finding of his game; and if at the end of the day he returns home with four or five brace of birds and a hare or two, his expectations and wants are satisfied, and he feels in a more healthful state of mind and body than the battue man who has not probably walked much more than a mile to slaughter his twenty or thirty brace. I would not if I could be a dead shot, a distinction which some are so ambitious to obtain, and others so tenacious of retaining, that they pick every shot rather than incur the risk of missing two or three out of a score. I have known *dead shots* so annoyed at failing at a fair mark, as to be discomposed and out of temper the whole day afterwards. Poor fellows ! they were much to be pitied.

It has always been my impression, and I think not an erroneous one, that of all species of dogs a fox-hound is one of the most hardy and resolute, and, with good training and feeding, the most capable of enduring severe work. If four days, therefore, are found not too much for a well-trained setter or pointer, three days' hunting a week is nothing very extraordinary to expect from a fox-hound in the prime of life; and in drawing a comparison between the labour of the two animals in their different vocations, I think the setter, which works all the season, from grouse-shooting to the last day of pheasant-killing, has quite as much wear and tear to undergo as a fox-hound. I will take the dog above quoted as an example, who commences beating his ground about ten o'clock in the morning, and does not leave off working until three or four o'clock in the afternoon. The setter begins ranging at once, with about half speed, which is continued with little intermission (save when his master is firing and loading) during the day.

Now let us see how it fares with the fox-hound in his day's work. The fashionable hour of meeting now-a-days is about eleven o'clock. Say a fox is unkennelled in half an hour, and you have twenty or thirty minutes' burst, best pace, with a good finish—short, sharp, and decisive. A fox-hound in good wind and condition is little the worse for such a spurt as this. Allow, then, an hour for coffee-housing, and finding another fox; this brings you to past one o'clock. Say another hunting run of an hour and forty minutes, and you have had sport sufficient to satisfy any reasonable man for one day. The fox-hound has been going partly at full, and partly at half speed, with an hour's interruption, for about two hours and a half, and then returns home; and this is a day's sport far above the average, taking the season throughout, with any pack of fox-hounds, and taking into account blank and bad scenting days. But whether the scent be good or bad, game scarce or plentiful, the setter is continually on the gallop for four hours, at the lowest computation, and being employed to beat covert also, has no exemption from briers or black-thorn.

CHAPTER XV.

How to construct a Kennel for Harriers.—Eight Couples form a sufficient Pack.—A brief Disquisition on Reason and Instinct.—Distinctive Features of Harriers and Fox-hounds.—Fox-hounds unsuited to hunt Hares.—Objections to the old Breed of Harriers.

As few men would purchase a horse without having a stable to put him into, so must a kennel of some sort be prepared to receive a pack of harriers. I have seen very extraordinary places appropriated to this purpose; the end of an old barn or stable, a pig-sty, or ruinous old cottage no longer tenantable by human beings, by aid of a few props to the main beams, converted into a kennel. Passing by such makeshifts, I will take it for granted that the person who seriously asks me for information respecting the duties of a huntsman to a pack of harriers would make suitable arrangements for the reception of animals in which I am led to conclude he takes an especial interest.

The cost of erecting two small lodging-rooms, with a boiling-house at the back, would not be very great; in short, where materials are moderately cheap, it need not exceed twenty pounds. The dimensions must, of course, depend upon the strength of the pack—and that, again, will depend upon the taste or fancy of the Master—some men, glorying in the melodious cry of a full body of hounds, say from fourteen to sixteen couples; others maintaining that half that number are quite sufficient for the purpose on which alone they are bent—of killing every hare they find.

As there is such a diversity of opinion about the number of hounds requisite to hunt fox or hare, I will merely state that I have been frequently out hunting within the last few years with a very old and experienced Master of harriers, who has occupied that position for nearly thirty seasons, and the number of his hunting-pack in the field has never, at any time I have met them, exceeded eight couples, with which he is enabled to cope with the stoutest hill-hares, generally killing two or three a-day

Facts are stubborn things to fight with, and this is one from which some useful information may be derived as to the effectiveness of any pack of hounds depending on numbers. If eight or ten couples of harriers are deemed sufficient for every common purpose (which has been most incontestably proved), all beyond that number would seem to be unnecessary appendages, save only as contributing to the melody of a full choir of voices or tongues.

The gentleman I have mentioned as content with eight couples of harriers in the field is a man in affluent circumstances, and does not restrict himself to this short complement from necessity or parsimony, but from choice; and having had long experience, he may be regarded as good authority in everything appertaining to the science of hare-hunting. I may here mention the *finale* I witnessed to a run with his hounds, which, I must admit, did not increase my ardour (never very great) for pursuing the timid.

A hare had been found on the summit of a high hill, which commanded a view of the surrounding country for several miles; and as hares generally take a circuit, returning to the spot on which they are found, the day being sultry, and "Scrutator" in a lazy, listless state of mind, I kept my position, from which I could behold all the proceedings and manœuvres of the hunted animal. The circle was at first wide, and the hare, with her pursuers, passed close under me at a rapid rate, there being only a short distance between them. The next circle was much more circumscribed, and poor pussy returned jaded, fagged, and completely beaten to within twenty yards of my position. The hounds were then some distance behind her. She ran forward for about a hundred yards on the open down, then, carefully retracing her steps, threw herself off her line, by a few faint bounds, into a small ravine, where she lay, with her head turned to face and watch the approach of her enemies.

I never shall forget the intense anxiety I then experienced for the fate of this poor little hare, neither could I forbear almost identifying myself with her feelings at this agonizing and critical moment. I could realize what my own sensations would have been had I been flying from a band of Indian savages, and could hear their yells, and see from my ambush their dark forms leaping and bounding past, brushing the very bush in which I lay. One by one they flit by me, leaving my hiding-place undiscovered, screaming, shouting, with glaring eye-balls flashing fire, and out-hanging tongues. My heart beats audibly, painfully, from agitation; and hope begins to whisper, "they have passed away, never to return," when, lo! the grisly form of a fierce old savage, slow from age, but with sly, stealthy looks cast around on every side, appears in sight as a basilisk to arrest every faculty of my mind, and hold me entranced as his eye met mine, rendering me incapable of further movement His cautious, fiend-like gaze has in a moment detected my recumbent form, and, with a cry echoing far and wide, he springs upon me with a sudden bound. His grasp is eluded. I fly wildly, madly, with the last efforts of expiring strength, up the hill-side, where a savage on horseback, standing resolutely in my path, forbids escape in that direction. The yelling savages in advance, having lost my trail, wheel quickly round, and in another moment I am encircled by the returning band, all thirsting for my blood. Alas! poor pussy! one piercing scream is heard above the yells of her inveterate pursuers as she yields her last parting gasp.

The fox dies fighting with his foes. No scream or cry escapes him; and with fangs fixed firmly in the flesh of the hound which first assails him, his hold relaxes only with his latest breath. The wild stag contends fiercely with horn and hoof—raking, goring, and trampling on his pursuers, until overpowered by numbers. But the sole defence of the timid hare lies in her speed; that overmatched or worn out, she falls a helpless prey into the jaws of her enemies. We read of warlocks and witches in the shape of hares, and truly natural instinct has supplied them with an almost reasoning power in the extraordinary efforts they sometimes make to escape pursuit.

It is as nice a point to determine where instinct ceases and reasoning commences, with the brute creation, as to mark out the exact limits to which animal nature extends before verging into the vegetable. It has often struck me that the sea anemone partakes of both natures; its horns, which expand like a snail's in its natural element, immediately contract on being touched by the hand of man, and if severed rudely from its briny rock it fades and dies.

By instinct birds are taught to build nests, fishes to seek spawning streams, and animals of every kind to make provision for their wants, and guard against their natural enemies. There may be, and are most probably, some low gradations or degrees of reasoning powers imparted to dumb creatures, apparently little removed from mind or human intellect, and yet wanting in some of its first essentials, which sanguine people are inclined to interpret as equal to man's sole attribute. The hare is frequently known to retrace her footsteps for some distance, and then spring off with a long bound, at right angles, in another direction. Well, a human being in like circumstances could not devise a more clever mode to escape his pursuers; but this same hare would run her head into a noose or wire set on the bare downs, rubbing her chin against the very pegs placed thus openly for her destruction.

Of all animals the dog stands pre-eminent for the exhibition of the greatest degree of instinct, approaching so nearly to reasoning powers that we can scarcely divest ourselves of the idea that he possesses a mind to think, deliberate, and act. But a little consideration of the wide difference between the dog in a wild and in a domesticated state will serve to convince us that the greater part of the reasoning powers assigned to him is derived from the instruction he receives from man, and the close intercourse existing between the dog and his master.

Even among birds, the parrot, the magpie, and the starling are taught to speak, the bullfinch to whistle tunes, and the goldfinch and canary to draw water. It would be absurd to say that these birds must possess a mind or reasoning powers to do these things—they are merely imitators or living puppets in the hand of man, with sufficient comprehension to do his bidding. I remember seeing a so-called "sapient pig," placed in the centre of a large room filled with spectators, within a circle of cards, by which he would tell the hour of the day, the minutes and seconds, with sundry other tricks of a like nature. But what would have been the amount of knowledge belonging to this sapient animal without the directing eye and superintendence of his master? Nothing at all. I heard of another pig that was taught to range the fields and stand partridges like a pointer. This pig had evidently a mind or disposition to do what he was taught; but had he *the mind* to know what he was doing? I trow not.

But to return to the dog. What powers of mind does he display as evidently emanating from reasoning faculties, apart from instruction? We hear of Newfoundland dogs saving men from drowning; what noble (minded is, I suppose, understood) animals! They have been instructed from puppyhood to bring sticks and other things thrown into the water out of it; here is no display of mind. Sheep-dogs on the mountains go to bring home their master's sheep; they have been continually accustomed to do so, having learnt their lesson from older dogs. Pointers range the fields naturally in quest of game; they will (as nearly all dogs do) stand or point for a certain time before springing upon it; but they are finally taught, by severe discipline, to stand much longer, and back each other also. Dogs become exceedingly attached to kind masters. *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.* It is by instinct alone that hounds hunt their game; and this reminds me how widely I have been digressing from my subject—hare-hunting.

Having stated that the number of hounds is quite optional, and will probably be proportioned to the means or fancy of the Master, I will, as next in order, give my ideas of the animal to be employed in this chase. Thorough-bred fox-hounds do not become harriers by merely running hares; neither will harriers become fox-hounds by chasing a fox. The two breeds are quite distinct, or at least were so a few years since; and in some parts of England, but particularly in Wales, original packs of harriers are to be found without any mixture of fox-hound blood; and these, in my opinion, are the best hounds for the purpose. The distinguishing colours of the primitive race arc blue mottled, fawn, or black-and-tan. These are of the larger kind—large in the head, with heavy ears, long backs, and short legs, and, although not very speedy, sticking like leeches to the scent.

There is another variety, of lighter colours and lighter action, merry, musical little fellows, more active in their habits and paces, and quite equal to press a hare off her foil; and these I think far superior to the slower sort, unless a man prefers to run round and round half-a-dozen fields all day, like a horse in a mill. I have seen some very clever packs used for hare-hunting, composed entirely of dwarf fox-hounds, from eighteen to twenty inches in height, which in good hunting days would run into their game in twenty or thirty minutes when the hare ran straight; but on other days, with a bad scent, and short-running hare, they were continually going too far ahead, making their casts in fox-hound style. There is a very prevalent opinion that no dog can hunt a low or bad scent so well as a thorough-bred fox-hound. That might have been the case some years ago, before the *pace* advocates of the present day repudiated nose or hunting, as quite out of fashion, and unnecessary qualifications.

The natural dash and flash of the fox-hound have, however, always been, in my opinion, inconsistent with the short-turnings and doublings of the hare, which must be followed step by step to constitute true hare-hunting. Screaming and racing hares to death with fox-hounds is entirely at variance with the true spirit of that chase, and will be condemned by every genuine thistle-whipper. A fox-hound cross (one only), with the large old-fashioned or Southern harrier, may do very well; but beyond this I should not be disposed to go, were I to keep a pack of harriers. The general complaint made against the original breed is that they have too much tongue, and dwell too long on the scent, without making sufficient efforts to get forward with it. There is also another fault, in running the heel way, when they cannot advance with the head; both these defects would be remedied by a fox-hound cross. Trailing up to the hare in the morning disposes harriers to be noisy; but hare-hunters consider this as one of the essentials of their sport, yet it ought not to be much encouraged. In feeding their hounds also, huntsmen and masters of harriers should insist upon the silence of the pack during this process.

CHAPTER XVI.

Hare-hunting continued.—Requisites for the Kennel.—Good Food, cheap Food.—Difficulty of forming a Pack of Harriers from Drafts.—A veracious Account of how Squire Bragg purchased a Pack of dead Harriers for Five Hundred Pounds.—How to form a Pack when you cannot buy one.—A Story about the ruling Passion, which must be continued in the next Chapter.

It may be as well to describe the apparatus and utensils necessary for the kennel, which consist of two small boilers of cast-iron—one for meal, the other for flesh; a chopping trough, with a thick elm or oak bottom; a dipper or small bucket placed at the end of a long wooden handle, to dip out the boiled meat and broth; an iron-headed strainer made in the shape of a half moon, with thin bars of iron, to scrape all the small bones from the bottom of the flesh copper; and a chopper, with a wooden handle made in the shape of a T; two wooden feeding troughs, with flaps and hinges to cover over the meal, or let fall at the sides as may be required, the edges tipped with tin plate, to prevent rats and mice gnawing through them; a stirrer made like a strainer, to break up the meal and broth together, with a couple of prongs, one strong enough to raise a quarter of flesh, the other of lighter make, to shake up the litter; a poleaxe and knife, with buckets, besoms, and a mop. There should be also in each kennel or court a small cast-iron or stone trough, raised about sixteen inches above the pavement, to contain fresh spring water for the hounds to drink from, with wooden benches made of oak or deal spars for them to lie on, and I believe this catalogue contains all that a young Master will find requisite for the kennel.

In feeding all hounds, I believe the best food generally proves the cheapest in the end, and this, for dogs of every kind, is oatmeal; although, on the score of economy, harriers are often fed on the vilest refuse of grain—sometimes on raw flesh, mangold wurzel, or boiled potatoes, mixed with greaves and pot liquor. Such substitutes may suit those who are utterly indifferent about the appearance of their hounds in the field, but to a young Master of harriers, desirous of doing things well, I would suggest an entire rejection of un-wholesome food, and the adoption of a more generous diet. At the present price of corn, good oatmeal ought to be purchased for about sixteen shillings per hundred-weight, which, allowing half-a-pound of dry meal to each hound (sufficient for one of small size), would amount to about a penny a head daily.

Unless a pack of harriers can be purchased, the difficulty of forming one from drafts will be great; and if discarded fox-hounds are worth little, even from very large kennels, draft harriers are worth nothing beyond the value of their skins. In my day, fifty pounds was considered a large sum for a good pack, consisting of twenty couples; and the price of the article fluctuates, like that of other purchasable commodities, according to the supply in the market, sometimes descending to a very low figure indeed. A friend of mine told me he bought a lot of harriers not many years ago, at a public sale, for five shillings a couple; and I heard of another gentleman, who being obliged to give up hare-hunting, on account of a large game preserver having purchased the adjoining manor, and forbidding him his usual beat over the ground, finding it impossible to dispose of his hounds at any price, or even give them away, turned the lot adrift into the home preserve of this money-made proprietor, and there left them, slipping away himself through a by-road which passed close to the covert. This manœuvre was accomplished about nine o'clock in the morning, when the *novus homo* was performing his ablutions in his dressing-room, which commanded a view of his pet preserve; and great was his astonishment on beholding the hares scudding about in all directions, pursued by two or three couples of hounds, with their melodious voices echoing through the window at which he stood. A violent pull at the bell followed, on which his French valet rushed up stairs, thinking his master had been taken suddenly ill.

"François," exclaimed the master in a furious passion, "what the devil are all those dogs driving the hares out of the home-wood?"

"Me not know, sare—see no dog, sare."

"Then come here, you fool—do you see them now?"

"Ah! *oui—une grande chasse de lièvres.*"

"Hang your *liver*—don't stand grinning and grimacing there like an infernal French monkey, but send for my head keeper this instant—all my keepers—quick, begone!"

Downstairs rushed the valet, and in a few minutes, huddling on his clothes, the great man himself hurried down also, where he found the head keeper in hot haste already arrived, to know his master's pleasure in reference to these unwelcome visitors.

"What's to be done with them, your honour?" inquired Killfox.

"Shoot every dog instantly!"

"What, sir?" asked the keeper in amazement, "shoot Squire Trueman's harriers? Why, sir, we should never hear the last of it—it maun't be done."

"But I say," replied the great man, waxing hot with wrath, "it *shall* be done—shoot them, sir—kill them—or I'll discharge you this moment."

"Very well, your honour," said Killfox (not relishing the idea of losing a capital situation), "your orders shall be obeyed; only, begging your honour's pardon, I am a married man, with five small children, and can't afford to stand no law costs."

"That's my concern, sir," retorted the master, "hang the law costs!"

Exit Killfox,—who in ten minutes afterwards, assisted by the under-keeper, commenced a *battue* on the devoted harriers. Meanwhile, Squire Trueman, anticipating the *denouement* of his plot, had taken a little circuit round the country, until he heard the guns going in and about the home woods, when, thinking the time had arrived for his appearance on the scene of action, he set spurs to his horse, riding furiously, to make it appear he had arrived with a blown horse, as if from a considerable distance.

The first blast of old Trueman's horn as he neared the covert sent Killfox into the thickest part of the wood, where he lay *perdu*, leaving the under-keepers to encounter Trueman's anger, which burst forth with dire anathemas against master and men, when he beheld his hounds lying dead before him. After venting imprecations on the head of one of the understrappers he met in the drive, who merely pleaded in defence his master's orders, Trueman rode direct to the house, and giving a rattling pull at the hall bell, demanded to see Mr. Bragg.

"Not at home, sir," was the servant's reply.

"He *is* at home!" roared Trueman; "a sneaking, cheating, cowardly blackguard! Let me catch him, and I will horsewhip him within an inch of his life for killing my hounds!"

"Not at home, sir," again replied the tall footman, very demurely.

"Very well, sir," said Trueman; "then tell him, with my compliments, I'll draw his dirty purse-strings for this morning's work, which will hurt him more than a sound horsewhipping."

Trueman galloped away from the hall door, blowing his horn incessantly, but all that answered to its notes were three couples of his old hounds, which, having gone away with a hare for some few miles, returned just then to join their master. The rest of the pack were weltering in their gore.

The old Squire the following morning rode over to consult with a friendly lawyer and brother thistle-whipper how to take vengeance on the *parvenu*, of course giving his own version of the story —"Good scenting morning—went out early, just for a quiet gallop by myself—hounds ran away," &c. &c. The usual result of conferring with a limb of the law followed; action recommended without delay, which pleasing intelligence was conveyed to the great man by the same day's post —or compensation—say one hundred pounds.

This sum being considered enormous by Mr. Bragg, who knew the value of money, and was not to be imposed upon, nothing remained but to fight it out with the aid of the big wigs. The assizes drew on, but in the interim a rise in the market value of harriers took place. Lord Harbinger's pack had been sold at Tattersall's for one hundred and fifty pounds. Trueman's lawyer had therefore made a good hit in naming a cool hundred for the Squire's lot, although not thinking them worth half that sum. Still, for the sake of appearances, he knew full well the folly of claiming a low sum for damages in any case. The cleverest counsel was retained for Mr. Bragg, who made sure of winning by his powerful advocacy; and when the time arrived, efforts were not wanting to get over some of the jury to his side, one of whom, being known to the *parvenu's* solicitor, promised his assistance.

The case was argued *pro* and *con*, and Lord Harbinger's sale quoted on Trueman's side as evidence of the value of his harriers. The jury retired to consult together on their verdict, and the bribed juryman gained over all to his side for very low damages, save an old Yorkshireman, a thorough-going sportsman.

"I tell ye it wunna do, neighbours," said he; "the ould Squire's dogs was the finest cry in a' the country, and I'll hauld out for the hundred pounds."

"Then, sir," replied the foreman, "you will have to convert us all to the same way of thinking — not very likely — before we leave this room."

"Loikely or noo, neighbour," retorted the Yorkshireman, "I doan't feel inclined to lower the figure."

"Then we shall have to remain here all night without fire or food, and perhaps to-morrow also, unless you agree with us, Mr. Sturdy."

"Aweel, neighbours, ye's maun settle that matter amang yourselves, for I'm a thinking a *fast* day or two wunna come much amiss to me just now," rubbing down his portly stomach, "and save a power of doctor's stuff."

"Then you won't come over to our side, Mr. Sturdy?" inquired a little, thin man, in great perturbation of mind at the prospect of starving a night and a day.

"Noa, I tell ye, neighbour Sharp, until I be as weasel-carcassed as thee beest; and as good luck would ha' it, I gat landlord's nightcap in my pocket when I left yesternoon," which he pulled deliberately out, and prepared ready for use.

At sight of this Sharp grew pale, and whispering his brother jurymen, Sturdy was allowed per force to carry the day, one hundred pounds damages, with all costs, being awarded to Squire Trueman; and altogether, through this dog battue, the great Mr. Bragg was relieved of the current coin of the realm to the amount of five hundred pounds, which, as the Squire afterwards jocosely remarked, "was the highest price ever paid for a pack of harriers, with three couple returned."

Soon after this event, Trueman's eldest brother dying without issue, a large though not very rich tract of land in Yorkshire, consisting chiefly of mountain and moor, fell into his possession, with an old family mansion, rather the worse for having stood above two centuries without much money being lavished on repairs, and thither, glad to escape from the vicinity of such a disagreeable neighbour as Mr. Bragg, Trueman transferred his establishment, with the three couple of old harriers, from which have sprung the cleverest pack in that county, and, for anything I have heard to the contrary, are still hunted by the old Squire.

Failing an offer of such animals by public auction or private sale at the close of the season, it is, as I have before observed, a very hazardous undertaking to purchase drafts, which are seldom worth more than the coats on their backs; and as of two evils we should naturally choose the least, I think, being driven into the corner, I should pick up up some small unentered fox-hound bitches from various kennels, about eighteen or nineteen inches in height, and then commence breeding a pack to my fancy, by crossing them with an old-fashioned blue mottled Towler. I should, of course, expect, with such smart young ladies in their teens, uncommonly wild work for the first season; but by keeping silence and letting them get through their first lessons without assistance, the currant jelly would soon be found in requisition. Very little trouble is required in breaking young hounds to hare; it is a sweet scent, and all dogs will take to it naturally, rabbits being the only riot to be avoided.

A friend of mine, an old Master of Fox-hounds, some few years since, took a whim into his head that he was becoming too heavy to ride hunting, and accordingly sold his pack at the end of the season; but having no other pursuit, he felt time hang heavy during the summer months, and from lack of his usual ride in exercising his hounds in the morning, he became exceedingly inactive and sleepy, seldom breakfasting until nine o'clock, and was gradually increasing in weight, from a cart-load to a waggon-load, when he was seized with a severe bilious attack, and the doctor called in, who set to work with calomel, blue pill, and the usual accompaniments of black draught, &c. &c., at swallowing which my old friend made woeful grimaces and wry faces, never before having made much acquaintance with the contents of a druggist's shop. Whilst undergoing this severe discipline, a sporting neighbour called to see him and inquire the cause of his illness.

"Egad, sir, I can scarcely tell myself," replied the invalid, "except that I believe it is neither more nor less than a touch of the yellows which the puppies get sometimes when they come in from walk; for my eyes were as yellow as a guinea a few days ago, and I feel deuced queer still."

"Nothing more likely, old boy; and if you don't take to the pigskin again, and pretty quickly, the doctors will run you to ground in less than six months. Your country is still vacant, so take my advice, and get together some hounds without a day's delay."

My friend's humour jumping in the same direction, the arrival of "Bell's Life" was impatiently looked for (although the public sales had passed), when, to his great delight, a small pack was advertised for immediate disposal, which had been hunting fox and hare, and had been given up suddenly, in consequence of disagreement among the subscribers. With the next dawn his whipper-in (who, fortunately for him, had not yet got a place) was despatched to view the lot, and if possible, and not over-dear, to purchase them. Jem's return was, of course, anxiously expected; and he was immediately, on reaching home, ushered into his master's presence.

"Well, Jem," asked the old Squire, "what have you done?"

"Struck a bargain, sir, and bought them at once, out and out."

"The deuce you have!"

"Yes, sir—I know'd they couldn't be very dear at the price. Twenty couples for twenty-five pounds; so I clenched the business without more words, and we be to fetch 'em away by to-morrow, or next day at furthest."

"Well, that won't hurt us any way, Jem; but what are the hounds like?"

"Rum uns to look at, sir—wild, wiry-looking varmints as ever I see; but they do say in them parts, devils to go, sir, at anything, no matter what!"

"Well, never mind, Jem; it's a pack, at any rate; they have hunted together, that's something to begin with. So here's the money; and mind you put the couples on them coming along, and take Tom the groom to help you."

How Jem sped on his mission, I will relate in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Caudle Lecture by a lot of Curs.—The first and last of an Angola Cat.—"Ware cur Dog."—Over the Downs to Charbury.—How a Goat lost its Tail, and a Squire got a Ducking.—A short Moral to a long Story.—Management of Harriers in the Field.—Their two greatest Faults.—Allurements of Hare-hunting.

Jem returned in due course with the new pack, which had afforded him and Tom plenty of amusement on the road (not having been outside the kennel door during the last month); but arriving very late, after his master had retired to rest, the hounds were fed and left for the night, but not to sleep—for sleep they would not—neither could the old Squire, for their incessant barking and baying, the kennel being close to the house.

"Good heavens! my dear," exclaimed he to his wife, "what can I do with those confounded curs? They make me distracted with their incessant yelling."

"Send Thomas down to give them a good horse-whipping, Mr. C., unless you prefer going yourself."

Thomas was sent accordingly, and laid about him right manfully, which stopped the row for half-an-hour. Then it broke out again worse than ever. Thomas was again sent down to quell the riot, which he did for the time by thrashing the whole lot till he could thrash no longer. All quiet for an hour, and the old Squire had just dozed off into a comfortable nap, when the uproar re-commenced as bad as before.

"Confound those curs!" cried he, "they will be the death of me; what can I do?"

"Ring for Thomas again, Mr. C."

"No, no, my dear, Thomas has had enough for one night; we must now endure this nuisance till morning."

The old Squire did not require calling, and, breakfasting betimes, set out with his new pack and Jem to give them at least six hours' exercise along the roads. Rush came the pack out of the kennel, full cry, as if they were running a fox, nearly unhorsing the old Squire, whose horse swerved at such an unusual salutation.

"Confound those devils, Jem, what *is* to be done with them?"

"I'll do something with them, sir, before the day's out," replied Jem, as he fetched the ringleader, Hotspur, clean off his legs with a wipe of his heavy thong.

In passing through the village a cat crossed the road, and off went the pack full cry, running into her up against an old lady's door.

"Hang those brutes, Jem, what will they do next?" exclaimed the master.

"That's Miss Sharp's favourite Angola cat—she wouldn't have taken ten guineas for her. Better trot on, sir, pretty briskly," said Jem coolly, "or we shall have all the old women in the village about our ears."

Before leaving it, however, they chopped another pussy, who was fool enough to set her bristles up in defiance of these dare-devils. The Squire breathed more freely as they got out into the country; when, passing by a sheep-fold, out sprang the shepherd's dog, just to have a look at the passers-by. Finding so numerous a company, Shag dropped his tail between his legs, and moved off with his back up, showing his teeth. Foreman, seeing his attempt to retreat in fighting order, just gave a snap at his rear, which Towler seconding with another tug and a yell, Shag bolted without further notice, and took across the turnip field. In a moment away went the cry in full chorus, Jem swearing like a trooper, and vowing vengeance when he caught them; but Jem couldn't catch them, being indifferently mounted, and the further he rode the further he was behind, the lot running soon out of sight and hearing, until Shag, after a four-mile circuit over the downs, went to ground in his master's cottage in the next bourne. The old Squire followed in their wake with sundry ejaculations of "Good Heavens! what will they do next? What is to be done with them? Oh! dear! oh, dear! Miss Sharp's Angola cat! never hear the last of it! Confound the curs! I'll hang the lot."

On arriving at the terminus in the bourne, Jem was found sedulously engaged in the salutary process of flaying these dare-devils to the tune of "war cur dog," and but for the timely appearance of the Master, to whom they fled for refuge, the lot would have been dispersed over the country, so greatly were they terrified by Jem's whip and voice.

"There, Jem," roared the old Squire, puffing and blowing with his unusual exertion, "that will do; let 'em alone now, they have had quite enough whipcord for one day."

"They harn't had a quarter enough on it, sir," replied Jem; "and as for Fencer, I han't had him in hand at all, and he's about the wickedest of the party."

"Well, never mind Fencer; and now I suppose they have had exercise enough for the first day, and we shall have a quiet night after so much racket."

"Don't you be a deluding yerself, sir, with that idea," said Jem; "they wants twenty miles more to bring 'em into anything like sleeping order; and to my mind we'd better trot 'em over the downs to Charbury."

This being about ten miles further as the crow flies, the old Squire (who felt a little wheezy after his quick jolting along the road) began to demur, when Jem gained his point by adding—"Just as you pleases, sir; only biding awake two nights aren't very pleasant."

This settled the business forthwith, without further controversy; and Jem was directed to take the lead, in the hope of preventing more outbreaks. The party proceeded in very orderly array, with the exception of Fencer and Jumper, who tried to break away after a rook skimming over the open, from which they were stopped by Jem knocking over Fencer, whose attention was at that moment diverted another way. With this solitary attempt at escape they had approached within a mile of Charbourg Park, when, on passing a farm, a brown nanny-goat was grazing with some cattle. The attention of the pack was instantly arrested by this object, taking it for a deer, with which, *inter alia*, they had finished the previous season's sport. Jumper bolted fairly away at once; but the goat showed fight, standing on her hind legs, until Foreman, catching her by the tail, with a loud ba-ah she started for the farm yard, with the pack at her heels—Jem rating and swearing, cows bellowing, with twisted tails erect in the air, and the old Squire bringing up the rear, in dreadful anticipation of the result, muttering to himself as usual, "Good heavens! what *will* they do next!"

Round and round the farm yard they tore (the gates being closed), the goat ba-ah-ing, women screaming, cocks and hens cackling, the farmer and his men with pitchforks vainly attempting to knock them over—when Jem, turning his horse, met the party in full career; but, in aiming a desperate blow at Jumper, he overbalanced himself, and fell from his horse, which galloped away. Nowise disconcerted, and savagely bent on revenge, Jem pursued the delinquents on foot, when the farmer's wife, throwing open the gate just at this critical juncture, the goat fled into the stable, followed by the whole cry, and Jem at their heels. Shutting the door, he placed himself before the affrighted animal, now brought to bay, and with double thong in hand, felled Jumper and Foreman with a crack upon their sconces, which silenced them effectually. The others fell back in dismay at the fall of their leaders; but Jem relaxed not his efforts with whip and voice until the whole lot stood abashed and confounded, yelling with pain at Jem's furious onslaught. But Jem was not yet satisfied, so he shouted to the farmer through the window, "Get Master's whip, Mr. Styles, and lend a hand here, for I'm a most tired of the job."

No sooner said than done; when the farmer, squeezing himself through the stable door, tucked up his sleeves ready for action.

"Now, sir," said Jem, "when you're ready we'll just give these warmints summat to remember goat-hunting to the end of their lives."

The yelling that ensued no pen can describe; and a fierce bull, which occupied the next compartment, maddened by the uproar, broke loose from his moorings, and Samson-like, making a rush at the door, carried it post and all into the yard. The old Squire (riding about sixteen stone), having often before experienced the difficulty of mounting his high horse, was sitting, the picture of despair, in his saddle, with his back to the stable-door, not heeding the exclamation of the herdsman, "And now the bull's out" (as if the climax of all things had arrived), when that infuriated animal, charging his horse in the rear, sent the old gentleman flying out of his seat into the duck-pond, whose waters were none of the sweetest, resembling in colour the darkest coffee. The depth not being sufficient to float the leviathan, there would have been an inglorious end to this renowned sportsman (who, from having fallen on his back, was powerless to raise himself) but for the timely assistance of the hind, who rushed to his rescue, holding his head above water, and vainly attempting to drag him out; he might as well have pulled at the bull's tail.

"Here, Thomas," cried he, "to a clod looking on and grinning from a barn, "lend a hand, will 'e, or t'ould Squire 'll be smothered. I can't wag un an hinch."

A buxom dairy-maid, pitying him (as women always do those in distress), lent Thomas a flap in the face with her brawny fist, which stopped his laughter instanter; and by the aid of the three the old gentleman was dragged forth and set up on the perpendicular against the wall (still exclaiming, " Good Lord ! what *will* they do next !") *coffee* distilling from every garment, where he was undergoing the process of wringing out, when the " Missis " appeared, offering her husband's wardrobe, and begging him to come in and change.

" Thank you, my good woman," replied he ; " but as to your rigging me out in Styles's vestments, the old sow there might as easily get into a rat's hole as I should into his small clothes. But if you will bring me a glass of brandy and water, I will accept that with many thanks, and then ride home as soon as possible."

When the stable door was opened the pack limped away in doleful plight.

" There, sir," exclaimed Jem, as he wiped the perspiration streaming down his face, " I'll forgive that lot, Fencer and Jumper too, if ever they looks a goat again in the face, or any other animal as I bids 'em not look at. But lor ! Master, what's the matter wi' ye ? Ye be the colour of mahogany."

" Dip in the pool, Jem, that's all. So now let us be off, for I want drying. But I fear you have been too severe upon those poor devils !" pitying their maimed condition.

" I han't, begging your pardon, sir ; 'twere just a trial between us who's to be master ; and as

I think that little matter is now settled to their entire satisfaction. We shan't have no more bother about chopping old women's cats, nor running arter sheep-dogs nor nanny-goats."

The old Squire pulled out a sovereign and handed it to the farmer's daughter, who was crying about her pet goat, Jem exclaiming, "There, Miss, don't ye fret no more; she ain't much damaged, 'cept about the tail, and a little salt and water will set it all straight again."

The runaway horse having been caught, Mr. Styles brought out a large jug of ale, which Jem and he soon dispatched between them; and the discomfited pack, being collected from outhouses and straw heaps by sound of horn, limped off considerably the worse for that morning's excursion. The Squire slept soundly that night, notwithstanding his ducking, and so did the hounds; and from that day Jem's rate was sufficient to keep them in good order until cub-hunting commenced.

The outbreaks of this pack may be taken as a sample of what may be expected from hounds accustomed to run anything from a red-deer to a red-herring!

"Friendship, like love, is but a name,
Unless to one you stint the flame."

And this is equally true of hare-hunting. The harrier must be stinted to one *flame* or scent.

Now concerning the management of the pack in the field. Noise must be avoided; draw quietly, whether stubble or grass, turnip or fallow field, hedge-row or coppice. Allow of no views or view halloos. Notwithstanding the mania for screeching like owls, "Hollering," as Jem said, "can't be allowed at no price;" and therefore the young Master and his new field, following Jem's example with his new pack, had better come to an understanding on that point at first starting, which will save a deal of trouble afterwards; and if the Master is resolute, as he ought to be in this respect, and takes his hounds home just three times following, when the screeching commences, his rule will be established *nem. con.* *Vice versâ*, he will be thought a good-tempered fool, and his harriers hunted in turn by every man in the field who gets the first start.

Now in drawing for a hare, whether in coppice or hedge-row, or crossing the hounds over fallow or open ground, there is no occasion for the *Yoicks-ings* or *Hoicks-ings* so vociferously used by huntsmen to fox-hounds. Harriers will show by their movements or tongues whether their game is near at hand or not; and as hares will often lie like stones until absolutely whipped out of their forms, silence and patience are both required, or you may draw over half-a-dozen in a day, where they are tolerably abundant. Beat thoroughly every nook and corner of one field before entering on fresh ground. Where hares jump up in view, the hounds will be wild enough without increasing their eagerness by screaming. Let them go away as quietly as possible, or they will run over the scent, since hares when first found in enclosed land generally turn short, and hare-hunters never need be in a hurry or flurry on first finding their game, or at any period of the chase. Hares seldom run like foxes, straight away for a given point without loitering, except in the month of March, when jacks sometimes travel considerable distances. Foxes make for earths of drains. Hares, having no such places of refuge, endeavour to escape discovery by hiding in anything that will screen them from view. When not severely pressed, they stop and listen, loiter about, and then throw themselves down anywhere.

> "The scented dew
> Betrays her early labyrinth, and deep
> In scattered sullen op'nings far behind,
> With every breeze she hears the coming storm,
> But nearer and more frequent, as it loads

> The sighing gale, she springs amazed, and all
> The savage soul of game is up at once;
> The pack full-opening, various; the shrill horn
> Resounding from the hills; the neighing steed,
> Wild for the chase; and the loud hunter's shout,
> O'er a weak, harmless, flying creature, all
> Mix'd in mad tumult and discordant joy."

Harriers seldom require casting; in fact, as a general rule, they should not be cast at all. Supposing they cannot hold their line over a dry piece of fallow, fifty to one the hare is in the middle of the field; and while a wild huntsman would be making a scientific cast forwards, his game would take the opportunity of making a more scientific cast backwards—*i. e.* slipping away behind his back. A sensible man will soon discover whether the hare is a flier or not, and act accordingly. In some localities hares run tolerably straight, having a point to gain in some distant covert; but field-bred hares almost invariably make a circuit, returning to the place where they were found.

The two greatest faults in harriers are skirting and hanging on the scent, for which there is no remedy but a charge of powder and shot, in place of a halter, hanging a dog being, in my opinion, a horrible mode of destroying life by slow degrees, his weight not being sufficient to dislocate his neck.

To those who enjoy hunting, and the working of hounds, hare-hunting presents many allurements; it has also several recommendations. There is a total absence of all that bustle and parade attending the meeting of fox-hunters. There is no earth-stopping to be done over-night, or preparations of any moment to be made. There is no necessity for scalding your throat with a hot cup of tea, if late for breakfast, in dread of being too late at covert side; should the day prove boisterous, or torrents of rain fall, you may defer your amusement until the morrow; and even if the fixture be regularly advertised, it is most probable few objections would be raised by your friends to such a proposal.

A hunted hare is not bad eating, which is more than can be said of a fox, although the hounds are entitled to their share also, for rest assured, to make harriers good, they require blooding as well as fox-hounds. Whatever the weather, your game is sure to be above ground, although hares change their sitting with the wind, seeking the most sheltered situations when the elements are boisterous. Down hares are the best and stoutest, and going long distances to their feeding grounds, generally run much straighter than those in an enclosed country; and to catch these, hounds must run as well as hunt. Any man who possesses common sense and common patience will be able to hunt a pack of harriers, which, in fact, require very little interference on the part of their huntsman or Master, for the more they are handled and hallooed the worse they will become. Hare-hunting must be considered as a quiet recreation, apart from noise, parade, and ostentation; and I quite agree with Beckford, "that if you make a serious business of it you spoil it."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Fox-Hunting in North Wales.—Two distinct Varieties of Partridges to be found there.—Parvenu Encroachments on the old Hunting-Grounds.—Woodcocks and Grouse.—Climate and Provisions.—Poaching in the Rivers.—A Pack of North Wales Fox-hounds.

It may prove an instructive lesson to English Masters of fox-hounds, and to those sticklers for all the outward pomps and state ceremonies attendant upon, and considered indispensable to, our huge, overgrown fox-hunting establishments in England, to know how the chase of the fox is carried on among a people who still speak the language, and very many of them still preserve the manners and customs of their forefathers. Englishmen will be slow to believe that amidst the mountainous districts of North Wales the race of ancient Britons yet exists, unalloyed with other blood, and that there are thousands of the peasants and small farmers to whom the English language is an unknown tongue. Such, however, is the fact, beyond cavil or dispute, and a very unpleasant fact for an Englishman to discover when losing his way amongst these mountains. I have during my rambles through the country met with numbers to whom I could only make known by signs and gestures my wants and wishes; for to all my inquiries one answer alone was returned—"Dim Sassanach," which means, "No English."

The original Welsh people are decidedly a fine race of men, with powerful frames, of simple habits and hardy constitutions, invigorated, no doubt, by their mountain breezes, and particularly partial to field sports. I was out sporting one day with a friend, who, having killed a hare in the presence of the occupier of the land, desired his keeper, a Welshman, to hand it to the farmer, who, on taking it, gave us to understand that, although much obliged, he would rather have seen the hare alive running before the hounds.

Where game is not strictly preserved, poaching is of course carried on to a considerable extent, yet not on the large scale practised in England; as a proof of which, partridges are more abundant even on unprotected lands there than in many of the best English manors; in fact, the nature of the country (night nets being unknown) is their chief protection from the gun of the sportsman. I met with two distinct varieties of partridge in North Wales; the mountain bird being of much smaller size and of a lighter brown than those bred in the low lands, which are finer and of better flavour than any I ever saw in England. The coveys generally were larger, often exceeding twenty in number, and from the hilly nature of the country, and the soil being light and stony, it is evidently most favourable to the young broods of winged game, from the absence of those large fissures of the land in the heavier soils of England, produced by the heat of the weather during the breeding season, in which thousands of young partridges and pheasants are annually engulphed before they have obtained the use of their wings. The hares and rabbits also were of larger size, the flesh of the latter being exceedingly white and well flavoured.

A few years ago shootings might be obtained on very moderate terms, but the Manchester Cotton Lords are now buying up the land in all directions, and the race of old Welsh squires, like that of the North American Indians, is rapidly disappearing from their old hunting grounds. Woodcocks, which abounded formerly in North Wales, are still moderately plentiful during the winter months, and wild ducks are seen in considerable numbers on the mountain lakes and rivers in the lower grounds. There is also a good sprinkling of grouse in some parts, on the preservation of which, however, I did not hear of much care being bestowed. On the whole, North Wales may be called peculiarly a sporting country, more adapted to the shooter than the hunter, although fox-hunting, hare, and otter hunting are still maintained there, *more antiquo*, notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties attending these latter sports.

The soil is retentive of scent, even on the highest hills; but riding with fox-hounds across the mountainous parts, so continually intersected by crags and precipices fearful to contemplate, is entirely out of the question. The climate generally is humid, and not so salubrious as it has been supposed; in fact, it is not suitable to any except strong constitutions, consumption being a very prevalent disease, typhus fever also prevailing in the villages which lie under the hills.

By the intervention of railways the price of provisions has now become nearly equalized in every locality, and it is a mistake to suppose that any one can live cheaper in an outlandish village of

North Wales than in London, for the only two articles of consumption to be obtained there at a moderate rate are poultry and eggs.

Against the fish in the river poaching is pursued to a murderous and ruinous extent, in season and out of season, by day and by night, by rod and spear, by torchlight and moonlight, with nets and night lines; and but for the rocky passes of the stream higher up, through the ravines, where the fish find shelter and protection from the net, beneath the stones of the foaming torrent, salmon and trout would soon become totally annihilated in the Welsh rivers. But I am losing sight of my subject in these general remarks on the other sports of the country.

On the morning of the 20th of ——, the quiet little village of M——d was roused from its usual repose by the arrival of Mr. V——'s fox-hounds. "The horn sonorous calls"—and the inhabitants rush out to welcome—not the eighteen or twenty couples selected, as in England, for a day's sport; not "the many-colour'd hounds in all their beauty's pride," with the gay cortége of pink coats, mounted on the satin-coated, racing-like hunters of the Saxon; but—tell it not at Quorn, publish it not in the streets of Melton—nine aboriginal specimens of the Welsh harrier honoured by the name of fox-hounds, accompanied by their huntsman, made their appearance. By the prolonged blast of the horn echoing through hill and dale, straggling horsemen might be seen flocking in hot haste to the scene,—not of action, but parade, where, after time had been afforded to all beholders for the inspection of the hounds, it was formally announced that the hunting of the fox would commence at eight o'clock on the following morning, in a covert within a mile of the village. The huntsman then withdrew with his darlings, of which he appeared to be not a little proud; but as English huntsmen may be curious to know something more, I will give a short description of their appearance.

The two largest and best-looking dogs, Raglan and Reveller (with a cross of fox-hound blood from the Vine kennel), black and white, stood about twenty-two inches in height, and were pretty correct as to form, with straight legs, good feet, and muscular loins. Then two couple of the old blue-mottled sort, about twenty-one inches high, with a good deal of bone and power. Of these, Tuner was reported to be a most wonderful hound for perseverance and endurance, and of such indomitable courage, that one season he ran seven miles with a broken leg, and swam a river at the end of the run, getting up in time to have a taste of the fox. There were a couple of sisters, one badger-pied, the other black and white, smart-looking bitches, standing about twenty inches, just the stamp for a mountainous district; and another couple nearly white, with a red ear each, of about the same height, and apparently originally harriers, completed the complement.

Mr. V——, who lives generally near Macchynleth, and has property also near M——d, has been unable, from bad health, to hunt his own pack for several years, which used to consist of fifteen couples; but to oblige the farmers he still keeps a few hounds (in all six couples) for their amusement, being himself incapacitated from joining the sport, with a huntsman, David Jones, now officiating for his first season in that capacity, who, as his name denotes, is of original Welsh extraction, and *totally* unacquainted with the English language.

Hounds have been kept in Mr. V——'s family for nearly two hundred years, and even with this short remnant capital sport is afforded, and they kill about three out of five foxes, which, considering that earth-stopping is a thing little if ever attended to, speaks volumes for the prowess of this short pack.

On the appointed morning a fair sprinkling of sportsmen congregated at and about the place of meeting, with a considerable number of pedestrians; and the hounds being thrown into Rhospenbua Wood, bold Reynard deemed it advisable to vacate the premises without waiting for forcible ejectment, and broke away directly over the hills for about three miles and a half; then sinking into the vale, set his head straight for a large head of earths on Brynfrannod (*Anglicè* Peacock's Hill), over a fine grass vale, intersected by the river Vernieuw. A run, however, was not on the cards for this occasion, although there was evidently a good straight-running fox on foot; for the huntsman not being with his hounds when they came to a check in a grass field, they could not again hit upon the scent, and another fox being hallooed at the same time back on the hills, the pursuit was given up, and a pottering day's work the result from the failure of the scent, the mountain tops being enveloped in mist.

CHAPTER XIX.

Scrutator in his Shooting Jacket.—A quick Method of filling the Bag.—Accidents arising from the imprudent handling of Fire-arms.—The Poaching Fraternity.—A Sporting Poet.—The Habits of the Partridge.—Pointers crossed with the Fox-hound.—Old Ponto.—What Pointers can do when well trained.—The distinguishing attribute of Pointers common to the whole Canine race.

> "Now the rude clamour of the sportsman's joy,
> The gun fast thundering, and the winded horn,
> Break the long silence of the peaceful glades."

With the month of September actual business begins, and whilst with his staunch brace of pointers the shooter is ranging the stubbles and turnip fields, the huntsman, with a few steady supporters, and thorough-going fox-hunters, is knocking about the cubs in the neighbouring woodlands, and watching with anxious eye the progress of his young darlings, whom he is training up in the way they should go. Many an ardent fox-hunter, however, does not disdain the shooting jacket during the month of September, and whilst his horses are in training for the ensuing month, prepares himself also, by strong walking exercise, to be fit for the coming fray.

To the young and ardent sportsman there is a great amount of excitement inseparably connected with the first day of partridge shooting, although not of so long duration as fox-hunting. I can well remember with what anxiety and pleasurable anticipations this event was looked forward to by myself when a boy. The month before this long wished-for day was industriously employed in having the pointers in proper order and condition; the whereabouts and number of coveys ascertained, the cutting of corn almost impatiently watched, as it fell slowly before the sickle, and gradually disappeared from the fields. The day preceding this grand event was devoted to the arrangement of shooting accoutrements, laying in a stock of powder and shot, cleaning the gun, and other necessary preparations. In those times, by the break of day we were in the field; breakfast was laid over-night, and by three o'clock of the auspicious morning we were astir, with little trouble in being awakened from our restless slumbers. Although it is well known to experienced sportsmen that the early dawn is by no means the most favourable time for partridge-shooting, yet could not our impatience be checked by this consideration. We were generally on the ground when the birds were calling all around us to prepare for their morning meal in the stubble fields, and little time was allowed them for breakfast. The first shot was often fired in the direction pointed out by the covey at its first rising, without our being able to distinguish one bird from another; or in other words, into the brown of the covey, which if it did not effect much execution, would have at least the effect, according to our old keeper's ideas, of scattering them abroad, and making them lie closer for the next discharge.

The aim of every steady and well-broken sportsman should be directed to one individual bird, but when the covey wheels round I have seen some clever hands wait the birds crossing, and bring down their brace at each shot. This is a quick method of filling the bag, although not considered quite the legitimate one. Some men shoot with one eye closed, others with both open, directed along the barrel of the gun, but I have known some capital shots who never look at the barrel at all. When the birds rise their eyes are instantly fixed on their victim, and the gun rises as if mechanically to the point. When a tyro, the instructions I received from a keeper (who was a dead shot) were to close one eye, and to fire the instant the bird's head crossed the sight. This rule, I am fain to admit, was not always punctually observed; for having a gun which was inclined to kick a little, it often happened that at the critical moment of pulling the trigger *both* eyes became closed, and with a nervous bob of the head, a most innocuous discharge against the feathered tribe was the result. A recoiling gun should never be placed in the hands of a young beginner, as it is ten to one that it spoils him for a good shot, if not for ever afterwards, yet for a considerable time at least. Our keeper, however, formed an exception to this general rule, for he always shot with a violent kicker, because the gun would kill at long distances. There was on his right cheek a regular *raw* established during the whole shooting season; but although receiving such tremendous taps that the blood often trickled down his face, he never bobbed his head, nor could we persuade him to resign his favourite.

Fatal and fearful accidents are of almost daily occurrence from the imprudent and careless handling of fire-arms, but it is wonderful, considering the immense number of guns now in use, amongst all classes of Her Majesty's liege subjects, and the ignorant hands in which they are continually to be found, that accidents of this kind are not multiplied fifty-fold. Where one gun was in use fifty years ago, there are now at least thirty. This is, of course, all the better for the trade; and when the French land on our shores there ought to be no lack of sharp-shooters, though I much question if our poaching vagabonds would relish trying their hands at any larger game than hares, pheasants, or partridges. In my time, I have become acquainted with many of the poaching fraternity, but never yet met with any of their profession who could be called a brave man. The same may be said, perhaps, of the general breakers of the law in other respects,—"Conscience makes cowards of us all." Poachers, however, when in a body together, and allowed time for deliberation, do often commit cowardly and brutal attacks upon the keepers and their watchers, when they have superiority in numbers. Since the sale of game has become legalised, there is now little excuse for poaching, as the market is constantly supplied from the large game preserves, and by our *battue* men, whose bloody exploits are so pompously paraded in print. Slaying whole hecatombs of hares, pheasants, and other game, with the sole object of boasting who can destroy the greatest number of lives within the shortest given space of time, never did, and never will, come into the category of real sport. The poet, when drawing a comparison between the beasts of prey and lordly man, thus breaks forth :—

> "Not so the steady tyrant man,
> Who, with the thoughtless insolence of power,
> Inflamed beyond the most infuriate wrath
> Of the worst monster that e'er roamed the waste,
> For sport alone pursues the cruel chase,
> Amid the beamings of the gentle day ;
> Upbraid, ye ravening tribes, our wanton rage,
> For hunger kindles you, and lawless want ;
> But lavish fed, in nature's bounty rolled,
> To joy at anguish, and delight in blood,
> Is what your horrid bosom never knew."

Our poet then (who had evidently some good sporting blood in his veins), after lamenting that the wolf and the wild boar no longer exist in our British Isles, to test the courage and daring of our sylvan youth, thus recommends as worthy of pursuit bold Reynard :—

> "Give ye, Britons, then
> Your sportive fury, pitiless, to pour
> Loose on the nightly robber of the fold ;
> Him from his craggy winding haunts unearthed,
> Let the thunder of the chase pursue ;
> Throw the broad ditch behind you ; o'er the hedge

High bound, resistless; nor the deep morass
Refuse, but through the shaking wilderness
Pick your nice way into the perilous flood;
Bear fearless, of the raging instinct full;
And, as you ride the torrent to the banks,
Your triumph sounds sonorous, running round
From rock to rock in circling echoes toss'd;
Then scale the mountains to their woody tops;
Rush down the dangerous steep; and o'er the lawn,
In fancy swallowing up the space between,
Pour all your speed into the rapid game;
For happy he! who stops the wheeling chase,
Has every maze evolved, and every guile
Disclosed; who knows the merit of the pack;
Who saw the villain seized, and dying hard
Without complaint, though by a hundred mouths
Relentless torn."

This is rather a long-winded quotation, but I have given it at length, to show that our bard entertained tolerably correct ideas of what a fox-hunter ought to be. His description of the Bacchanalian orgies, which are said to be enacted in the evening, may have been applicable to the dark ages, but certainly does not belong to fox-hunters of our day. Shooting however, is our proper theme, although an old fox-hunter may be pardoned this digression.

Grouse and partridge shooting entails a considerable expenditure of bodily exertion, particularly the first, which has not been inappropriately styled the fox-hunting of all gun sport. But even these hitherto wild sports have, by the battueing system of the age, been shorn of as much labour in the pursuit as possible, by the over-crowded quantities of the game preserved on certain moors and manors.

The habits of the partridge are little understood by the generality of sportsmen, who, where there is a scarcity of game, often beat over unnecessarily a great quantity of ground, and tire their dogs to no purpose. As soon as the morning dawns partridges leave their roosting ground to feed on the stubbles, where they remain until nine or ten o'clock in the morning. In enclosed countries they then draw away to dry pastures, sunny banks, potato-grounds, turnip-fields, or seed clover, which is a very favourite resort. Old and dry fallows also are much frequented, where they pick up small snails and worms. About three o'clock in the afternoon they invariably return to their feeding-ground, on wheat, barley, or oat stubbles, where they remain until the evening closes in; then calling themselves together, they take flight to their roosting-place, which generally is on a piece of old rough fallow ground, when the stubbles are much disturbed by shooters.

According to the hour of the day an experienced partridge shooter knows where to find his game at once, without toiling over unlikely ground. The field should always be traversed by the dogs against the wind, if possible, and beaten over cross ways. I have a decided objection to pointers scoring away straight over the ground, which badly broken dogs will do, as they often leave the birds behind them; and in this manner I have known several coveys entirely missed by a rapid sportsman, and met with afterwards in the same fields by a more patient workman. The corner of a field is not the most unlikely spot to find partridges in, and every acre should be well tried before leaving one enclosure for another. In open countries, where there are scarcely any fences, dogs may be allowed a wider range, but still they should be made to quarter their ground.

Some of the best pointers I have ever seen, both for nose and work, were from a cross with a fox-hound. They required a good deal of trouble and patience in breaking, but I never saw them beaten in the most severe day. I have shot over many different kinds of pointers in my time, but this cross was decidedly the best. The old-fashioned Spanish is now almost, if not quite, out of fashion, and no loss. I was once master of an individual dog of this species, the very ugliest of the canine race I ever encountered. He possessed, however, some good qualities, but it cannot be said of him, as it is often asserted of plain bipeds, that good temper made up for a deficiency in good looks, as he happened to be just about the roughest disposition one could possibly meet with in the course of a life. Old Ponto would do very well if left in undisturbed possession of the field and his own way of beating it, which was in a long, scrambling jog trot; and possessing a good nose, it rarely happened that he missed his birds. He would stand like a post until the gun was discharged, but " down charge" was an unknown or rather an unheeded term in his vocabulary, if he ever had one. Nothing could have made him submit to such a degradation as this except a charge of shot through his head. The bird he would fetch when dropped, or, if wounded, would pursue until caught, and if in a very bad humour, he would ruffle him considerably before delivered up. This, I conclude, had formed part of his education before I became the purchaser of the aforesaid Ponto, and remonstrance I found to be of little avail.

Upon our first meeting in stubble fields, finding " down charge" or other such objurgations, so little heeded by my friend Ponto, I took the liberty of calling to my aid a little auxiliary in the shape of a heavy pocket whip, which I thought might save me further explanations; but no sooner did Ponto set eyes on my little pocket companion, evidently to him an old and not very agreeable acquaintance, than without more ado he came straight at me, and seizing my coat collar, hung resolutely on as a bull-dog would do to the bull's nose. This unexpected assault took me rather aback, but getting my right hand at leisure, I dealt my friend Ponto two or three such digs about the nose and head that he was fain to let go; but showing an inclination to renew the combat, I just meditated giving him a taste of the butt end of my gun, which dire intention clearly foreseeing from the uplifted stock, he stood off, with bristles erect, awaiting the blow—it descended not—second thoughts are often the best.

A short description of Ponto may not prove uninteresting, as exhibiting a portrait of the old Spanish pointer, now very rarely seen. He had very wide, thick lips, the under jaw projecting like a bull-dog's; neck short and thick, with a very loose cravat; forelegs, from the elbow downwards, as crooked nearly as a ram's horn; feet of the Dutch make, adapted for aquatics rather than gymnastics, back-bone of the Rosinante order, without loins; drooping quarters, with a stern, or tail, like a paint-brush; hind legs *à la grenouille.* Ponto was therefore no beauty; but having invested the sum of five pounds in the purchase of the said Ponto, I was obliged to take him for better for worse. Being my own property, I could do as I liked with him, and that goes for something with a youth of seventeen; so, after a little more wrangling, we became very attached friends, without his again attempting to attach himself to my coat collar.

My father possessed a perfect kennel of pointers, as beautiful as Houris, but these were never allowed to be used without the keeper's presence in the field. The appearance and working of these pointers was the most perfect thing of the sort I have ever witnessed. They were often taken out all together, eight bitches of one colour, white, with tanned ears, and of beautiful symmetry. Their style of hunting, standing, and backing each other was quite perfection. I remember on one occasion the keeper sending them over a wall just before he approached it, on the other side of which was a covey of birds. They, of course, dropped directly, but the last bitch was scambling over the wall, when, catching sight of her companions, she clung on the top, and there remained until he had flushed the birds.

In partridge shooting there should be as little noise as possible; no vociferous screaming of "So ho!" "Down charge!" &c. &c. All loud exclamations will produce the certain effect of scaring away the birds. A short whistle to attract the dogs, if ranging too wide, and a wave of the hand are sufficient. Our pointers were taught to drop whenever the hand was held up, so that if one dog took a point in one direction whilst the other was quartering in another, a short whistle brought him round instantly, and seeing the hand held up, he dropped immediately where he stood. There is a great deal of unnecessary cruelty often practised—too often, I fear—in breaking young pointers. The best bred will, as a matter of course, require the least trouble, but with all patience and good temper must be practised extensively, to attain the desired end of willing obedience.

The pointer is not so entirely an artificial animal as many have been led to suppose; for pointing or setting his game is natural to every sporting dog, although in a very modified degree, I have seen greyhounds, even in an enclosed country, when passing by the side of a hedgerow, stand suddenly still upon winding or seeing a hare, and after remaining a minute or two, as if rooted to the spot, dash at their game. Spaniels and terriers I have seen do the same thing scores of times, with rabbits or game in a bush. Fox-hounds I have also witnessed draw upon a fox in short covert, and after standing a moment or two, spring into and catch him in his kennel. I had once a greyhound which would stand partridges almost as well as a pointer, but a friend to whom I had mentioned the subject doubting it, I took the dog out into a field close to the house, where he found a covey of birds. The dog stood them in beautiful attitude, with head and tail erect, and having brought down a brace right and left, I presented them to my astonished companion. If two dogs meet in a road, coming from opposite directions, they will crouch down first, then draw upon each other, as a pointer does towards his game, then crouch again, or stand erect for some time before making a spring. This habit is natural to all dogs and other animals of a carnivorous nature. Lions, tigers, cats, and foxes approach their prey in the same manner.

CHAPTER XX.

Partridge-shooting continued.—Hints on the method of handling the Gun.—Accidents arising from the imprudent handling of Fire-arms.—Grouse-shooting.—Varieties of the Grouse species.—The Capercailsie.—Intimate connection between Poaching and Pilfering.—An obliging Communication.—A short digression about Babylon and Bandanas.—The first of October.—Speech is Silver, but Silence is Gold.—Hints on the Beating of Coverts.—The best plan for Rabbit-shooting.—An Easy Method of keeping Hares at home.—Scrutator has another fling at the giant Battue System.—An Extempore Duel.

Few gentlemen in the present day know or care anything about the raising of game or breaking pointers, which minor occupations are generally left entirely in the hands of their keepers. A brace of pointers in the field are quite sufficient, but where game is plentiful one good staunch dog is enough. In hot weather a shooting-pony is a great relief, and of service in carrying the game-bags.

In partridge-shooting not more than two guns should be permitted in the field with young hands, or mischief will be the result; and I would suggest a few rules to be observed by young sportsmen. In loading, the gun should be held in the left hand at arm's length, the hammer down on the nipple, and the cap put on after the gun is charged. The safest position in which it can be carried is under the right arm, with the muzzle pointing downwards. When game is expected to rise the piece may be transferred to the left arm, or held forwards in both hands. In going through hedges or over fences the hammer should be brought to half-cock, and the barrel held upwards; and in giving the gun to another person it should be held perpendicularly also, and the stock delivered in this position.

A schoolfellow of mine was shot dead on the first of September, a few years since, by his friend handing his gun to him through a hedge. The piece was on full-cock, and a twig catching the trigger, it went off, and lodged the contents in his side. Similar accidents are continually occurring from the careless manner in which guns are handled by inexperienced people. From the incautious use also of powder and the powder-horn, serious disasters will ensue. Of this kind I have known many accidents, one rather of a ludicrous nature, which happened in my own family.

We had been out shooting, and afterwards were sitting round the fire in the dining-room, when a loud explosion in the bed-room above lifted us at once to our legs. Upon running up-stairs we could not at first see any living being, from the smoke which filled the room; but soon, by the light of the fire, I could distinguish what appeared to be a bundle of clothes, lying against a chest of drawers, which, upon examination, turned out to be the under housemaid in happy unconsciousness. On further search being made, and the window thrown up, the form of my youngest brother, a lad of about twelve years of age, was brought to view, extended also at the foot of the bed, with a face as black as a chimney-sweep's. By the application of the contents of the water-bottle over the face of the sleeping beauty under the drawers, who was more frightened than hurt, consciousness was restored, although not in a very intelligible form, for between hysterical sobs and sighs, little information could be obtained as to the cause of the explosion. My brother was also much confused and scorched about the face, his eye-brows being completely singed off. This at once revealed the nature of the accident which had caused so much consternation to all parties. A shattered candlestick was discovered on the floor, and the remains of a powder-flask scattered about the room.

By dint of restoratives, and after his wounds had been carefully attended to, my brother was induced to make a full confession, from which it appeared that, having purloined a powder-flask from the hall whilst we were at dinner, he and the junior housemaid had promised themselves a little amusement up-stairs, with a few flashes in the pan, or rather candlestick. This game of fire-works on a small scale was to be conducted by the young lady holding a lighted candle, and my brother dropping a few grains of powder upon it, to make, as he called it, *a flare-up*, and a pretty flare up would most assuredly have taken place, through the whole house, had the powder-horn been nearly full, instead of nearly empty, which it most fortunately happened to be.

Some years after, a young gentleman of our establishment, whose vocation was principally confined to polishing boots and shoes, and who in appearance very much resembled Mr. Weller's pet, the fat boy, attempted a similar feat, with nearly a similar result, except that in place of having his face scarred his hand was severely injured, and he barely missed blowing the cook's head off as well, the powder-horn passing within an inch of it, and leaving a pretty considerable mark in the kitchen ceiling. The other servants being out at the time, this youth, having obtained possession of a powder-horn, was proceeding to enlighten the cook by the exhibition of his skill in making, as he termed them, *fizzes,* by dropping powder on a small plate of iron, which had been heated for the purpose, and placed on the table. The consternation of both at the result of the experiment may be better imagined than described; but as cooks are generally insured in the "Salamander Office," they are considered fire-proof, and ours, instead of fainting away, seized the poker to inflict summary punishment on the fat boy for his mischievous prank, as she thought it, upon which he fled into the yard, and on my rushing out to ascertain the cause of the uproar, he was found performing sundry gyrations to the tune of "*Hop o' my thumb.*"

Serious accidents often occur from guns being left loaded in the house, which should never be allowed, and the powder-horn should be placed out of the reach of children and servants. When youngsters we were rather careless with our guns, which were often left loaded in the hall; but the housemaid having one morning discharged a random shot at the floor, the recoil from which threw her into hysterics, orders were issued from head-quarters that no fowling-piece should be permitted to stand loaded within doors from that time forward. A great deal has been said in favour of hair-triggers, as they are termed; but I must confess I never could discover any great advantage in them, and they ought not to be trusted in the hands of young or nervous sportsmen.

Grouse and partridge shooting are of very short duration. Grouse, after the month of August, become wild, and packing together in large bodies, take long flights, leading the hardy sportsman many a weary mile over brae and burn, and toiling up and down the craggy hill-sides, with every now and then a random shot to reward his perseverance. In this manner, during the month of September, I have toiled for hours over bog and heather, and up to the mountain top, resting a while on some huge dismembered crag, whilst discussing the remains of my wallet and whiskey-flask, and then on again; and if at the end of the day I could produce six or seven brace of grouse, they were hardly earned and duly prized. But this was in the days of "auld lang syne," before the grand battue system began. In these luxurious times loading and firing are the great exertion; in fact, the present system of shooting may be likened to chopping cubs in covert without a gallop.

In every rural sport give me first the bodily and health-imparting exercise which, bracing, invigorating, and purifying of its superfluities the whole corporeal system, gives cheerfulness to the heart and vigour to the frame.

Of the grouse species we have four varieties—the capercailsie, or great cock of the woods, the black cock, the red or common grouse, and the ptarmigan. The two former resemble the pheasant in the habit of perching on trees; the red grouse, which are the most numerous, roost like the partridge, on the ground, and are found in many counties in England and Wales, as well as Scotland. The ptarmigan are seldom met with below the Highlands. It is much to be regretted that this magnificent bird, the cock of the woods, which in weight and size so nearly approaches the turkey, should have been allowed to fade away almost out of sight in Scotland, as the bustard has in England. For the disappearance of the latter there is at least a good cause,—the spread of cultivation on the downs; but in the sister country greater facilities than ever exist for the protection and preservation of the capercailsie in the rise of vast fir plantations, which are their favourite place of resort. Some spirited individuals have been endeavouring for these last few years to get up again a stock of this noble bird, and I trust the example will be followed by other sporting proprietors making an effort to perpetuate this king of the grouse species in all localities congenial to him. This bird is still to be found in Norway and Sweden in considerable numbers, and many are exhibited in the London markets.

Grouse may be domesticated as well as the partridge and pheasant, and as there is such a *furor* now for the exhibition of all specimens of the feathered tribe, from a Cochin China cock to a canary bird, I think it would well pay to exhibit some of these cocks of the wood, either in the wild or domesticated state.

It was prophesied by the opponents of the game laws, some few years back, that when the sale of game was legalised poaching would die a natural death. It was also predicted by the peace-making, fraternising Cobdenite school, that upon the repeal of the corn laws a cheap loaf would be the inevitable result; yet neither of these consequences has followed. Poaching is carried on to a great or greater extent than ever it was under the old game laws; but the reason there are fewer convictions is that small landed proprietors cannot afford to keep up a sufficient staff of men to contend against a large body of poachers, and therefore give up preserving game altogether; and farmers who, under liberal landlords, have now the privilege, or rather reasonable right, of killing the game raised and fed upon their own lands, kill what they can themselves, leaving the rest, or generally the lion's share, to the poacher, the dread of a *flare-up* in the farm-yard operating as an effectual check to deter the farmer from taking proceedings against these unlicensed sportsmen.

"Well," I hear some millionaire exclaim, "if you clodhoppers don't care about your game, why should not we or the poachers have it, and what's the harm done by poachers after all?" Not very much, perhaps, if these gentlemen would only confine themselves to taking what we do not care much about losing; but this is only the beginning of evils. In a neighbourhood in which I resided a few years since, the farmers allow the poachers to walk over the course without dispute; but the misfortune is, that as soon as the game is swept off, these midnight marauders commence their regular system of thinning out the poultry ouses.

Having rather a large assortment at that time of the fashionable Cochin China fowls, which were tall enough nearly to feed off the dining-table, without sitting up in an arm-chair, it was politely intimated to me that these higgling gentry intended to try their flavour upon the first opportunity; to which obliging communication I replied that not having the pleasure of their acquaintance, and to prevent any mistake as to identity of person, I would endeavour to set my mark on them, and should communicate my intention of so doing by a double speaking-trumpet, whose language they would not require an interpreter to explain. Two large dogs also were commissioned to give intelligence of their arrival, should their visits be made in the night season. This is not a very favourable state of things in the nineteenth century, but it was rather an out-of-the-way part of the country, and where the blue jackets had not yet made their appearance.

Fuss enough is made about the light-fingered gentry in the civilised haunts of men, Great Babylon, and all the minor Babylons; and should an alderman lose an old pocket-handkerchief, worth perhaps half-a-crown, the P. C.'s are all on the alert to detect the audacious offender. The shoe pinches. But what care these said aldermen if their civic feasts are provided at the expense of their country cousins? Not a rap. In season and out of season, all nature must pander to their capacious maws.

I was once much amused by the description given me by our old French Master, upon his going up to London, of the adroit manner in which he was relieved of a fine new bandana. It being the height of the London season, *Mossu* (as he was called by the younger boys), having obtained leave of absence from the school, set off to the great metropolis for a little recreation. Frenchmen are proverbially fond of theatrical exhibitions. Mossu therefore posted off one fine evening to Covent Garden, which was then in great force. Marching leisurely under the colonnade, he felt a pretty considerable pull at his swallow-tailed coat, then in fashion, and looking sharply round, he discovered an urchin quickly handing over his fine bandana to his lion. Mossu was taken aback at this cool method of doing business, but rather feared an encounter with this dark-looking gentleman. He therefore approached with all deference, and quietly apprized him of his loss by saying, "By Gar, sare, I am pick-pocketed!" to which the other responded by thrusting his ugly phiz close to Mossu's, with only the monosyllable—Ha-i-gh! which sent our friend to the right-abouts in double quick time.

On another occasion our old French Tutor must needs pay a visit to his own country, after an absence of more than twenty years, by which time he flattered himself he had become completely Anglicised, both in speech and appearance—a most extraordinary delusion on his part. He had left his native land on the outbreak of the revolution, and had never ventured to set his foot there again until after the battle of Waterloo, and restoration of the Bourbons. Even then, doubting the reception he might meet with after so long an absence, he resolved to pass himself off as a veritable John Bull; with what chance of success will appear hereafter.

Above all the characters in the world, he thought it would suit him best to assume that of an English Fox-hunter, and therefore decked himself out in a suit of the following description:—A low-crowned hat with broad brim, large red cravat, buff waistcoat, short-tailed, cut-away green coat, with large sporting buttons; short inexpressibles of white corduroy, and a pair of mahogany-topped boots. Thus equipped, he reminded one of the "monkey who had seen the world," and evidently appeared as much at home as, it is said, a hog does in armour, although I should question any of the porcine race being induced to try such an experiment even *vi et armis*.

That his name might tally with his costume, he assumed that of Harry Lee, and thus armed, as he thought, at all points, set off on his journey, and arrived safely at Calais, with an English friend. Had Mossu followed his companion's advice, and resolutely held his tongue, all might have gone well; but one of the custom-house officers, making rather free with his luggage, his ire was excited, and being questioned in turn as to his name, he drew himself up in a haughty manner, exclaiming, "I am Harry Lee, von English jontilman." This was too much for even the politeness of a Frenchman, and bursting into a laugh, he exclaimed, "*Ma foi, Monsieur, la parure est Anglaise, mais l'homme est François.*"

To return from this digression, I resume my pen for the first of October, the commencement of the regular season for all rural sports. Fox-hunting now begins in earnest, pheasant shooting, coursing, hare-hunting, wood-cock, snipe, and wild-fowl shooting, now in turn claim the attention of the various sportsmen. In wet weather pheasants are very reluctant to rise on the wing, and will run long distances, particularly old cock birds. The best time for shooting them is (while the coverts are thick, and before the fall of the leaf) in the afternoon, when they draw wing out of the woods to the neighbouring stubble fields or turnips; a man with a steady old pointer will obtain more shots at this time of day in an hour, than he would by beating the coverts half the day with a lot of noisy spaniels, which always do more harm than good.

In large preserves (which are out of the question with the general shooter, appertaining exclusively to the *battue* system) beaters are generally used with retrievers only, to pick up the wounded game. In shooting as well as in hunting, noise is destructive of sport, and a lot of yelping curs will drive game all over the country. The clumber spaniel, which is silent, and beats within a short distance of his master, is the only dog of the spaniel kind which should be used in covert shooting; but in short underwood, setters or pointers, taught to break their point as the game moves, are the best auxiliaries to fill the bag. After all, there is little good covert shooting until the leaves fall, and if pheasants were spared a month longer, until full-grown, it would be quite as well, for they seldom attain their perfection of growth or plumage until the month of November. Pheasant's polts, as well as turkey polts, are good eating, but they lack the flavour of maturer birds.

In beating large coverts for game, there should be several guns placed at certain distances in the drives, or close to the high wood, one man with a couple or two of silent spaniels beating the short underwood up to them. In our own woods we always used a long low net when the gunners were few in number; the pheasants were then obliged to rise, or run back again into the short wood. The word *net* may sound un-sportsmanlike, but in large woodlands, where we had an abundance of rabbits, it was our quickest plan for reducing their numbers; and by pitching off a few acres at a time, we cleared the ground as we went. Not being driven by dogs, few were ever caught in the nets, but at openings above and below the guns were placed, and to these points the rush was made by every kind of game.

The best plan for rabbit shooting is to have a short ladder placed against a tree near some well-used runs, and from this position you may fire away right and left, without their detecting your whereabouts. Seated on the lower limbs with my back placed against the trunk of the tree, I have dealt destruction around to the coney tribe from my hiding place, but from such an exalted position there is considerable risk in regard to flying shots at pheasants. On one occasion I toppled over, by forgetting that I was not on *terra firma*, and brought myself down instead of my pheasant.

Hares have a strong attachment to the place of their nativity. Those bred in woodlands will always resort to the covert for their sitting, rambling about at night for food; and those bred in the fields will hold to the fields, except when driven to the coverts for protection. The hare, being of a very timid nature, loves quietude, and they should always have certain fields to themselves, where they should not be disturbed, and in this manner large numbers may be kept together. They may easily be prevented breaking bounds, by the keeper going round the outside fences every other day, and stopping the runs or meuses with blackthorn or gorse. In this manner I preserved a great number of hares within a certain limit; and although there was a large covert belonging to a neighbour, only one field from my head preserve, I do not think he could boast of killing more than a dozen of my hares during the season. I had only a small gorse covert of two acres, bordering on four fields, for their protection, into which no dog was allowed to enter, and from this small place the whole manor was well stocked with hares.

As another instance of the sagacity of the canine race, I may mention that my greyhounds would never pursue a hare when she came in sight of the plantation; having been always called back, they knew that this to them was forbidden ground, and the hares appeared equally aware of the fact, straining every nerve to reach their place of protection.

The preservation of game, to a certain extent, is not only reasonable, but almost an indispensable to a country gentleman to distribute amongst his friends, acquaintances, and neighbours; but the regular battue system, and the consequent cruelties attached to it, such as gin-setting, shooting or poisoning all your neighbours' dogs and cats, pit-falls, in which any poor stray animal may be starved to death before found by the keeper; fox-killing, &c., &c., I have always held in the greatest aversion, as being of an un-English and un-sportsmanlike character.

A friend of mine, who was a capital shot, and could give pepper in more ways than one, was invited to a grand battue by a noble lord, who had very large preserves. Being of a very witty and convivial turn, he was asked to dine and sleep at the house the previous evening, and rendered himself, as usual, a most agreeable guest, both over the mahogany and in the drawing-room. After breakfast the ensuing morning, the preparations for slaughter were commenced on such a grand scale, double-barrels being whisked and handed about by keepers with as much *nonchalance* as if they were only walking-sticks, that my friend began to entertain serious thoughts about his wife and children left at home, the odds being sadly against his ever seeing them again. He therefore sought the protecting form of a huge under-keeper, behind whom (on pretence of talking about the game, &c.) he ensconced himself, and thus reached the scene of action in safety. Here he allowed all to take up the positions they fancied in the rides and drives, and thinking to be out of reach of their fire, posted himself in some three-year old hazel coppice wood, nearly as high as his head, as the most secure place from molestation.

The action soon commenced with the whirring of pheasants, screaming of hares, and squeaking of rabbits, as they fell beneath the fire of their murderous assailants, my friend contenting himself with occasional shots as the birds passed over his head, when all at once he felt something like red hot pins running into his face from the discharge of a gun in rather dangerous proximity to him, and of which, until then, he had been in happy ignorance. This unlooked-for assault instantly roused my friend's peppery disposition, and he hallooed out, "Who fired that shot?"

"I did," exclaimed a voice.

"Where are you?"

"Here."

"I can't see you, so hold up your hand."

The moment the hand was raised my friend *let drive,* and a proper uproar ensued.

"What do you mean by firing at my hand in that manner?" cried out the other.

"I have only returned the compliment; you sent your shot into my face, and I conclude I have sent one or two of mine into your hand, just to see how you liked them."

CHAPTER XXI.

Horse-breaking.—What Mr. Rarey has and what he has not done.—Can the Zebra be really tamed?—Nervous Temperament of the Horse.—Its Docility.—Difference between the trained Hunter of the last Century and those of the present time.—Sporting Men of the Old School and the New.—Proofs that a few things were known about Horse-taming before Mr. Rarey's time.—Essential point in which the system of the modern Horse-trainers breaks down.

On the subject of horse-breaking, and the system adopted by Mr. Rarey, which has caused rather an unusual sensation the last two years, I cannot forbear making some remarks, as somewhat analogous, without its cruelty, to the treatment of young and vicious horses practised by my father, by which he could do more with horses than Mr. Rarey has professed to teach, as shown by the public papers. Neither in London nor in the provinces have I met with one individual who has been present at Mr. Rarey's lectures, or in the most remote degree acquainted with his secret, if such it can be called, of "horse-taming."

But are there not hundreds—I may say thousands—of men in this country, horse-breakers, colt operators, and such like, who know that horses may be so subdued by being thrown down, or forced to lie down and exhausted, as to allow a man to dance a hornpipe on their ribs? And is not the practice of strapping up the foreleg of a vicious horse by grooms nearly as old as the hills? Without wishing in any degree to detract from the merits of Mr. Rarey's system, whatever it may be, I must be allowed to say, that the idea of an American coming forth to give the English nation lessons in horsemanship or horse-taming reminds me of my old friend Codrington's reply to a youth intent on instructing him in the "Noble Science," "*Teach your grandmother to suck eggs.*"

Still, Mr. Rarey has done great service in bringing this subject prominently forward before the British public in these (as to the management of horses) degenerate times.

> "Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
> Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta, fidelibus;"

and John Bull is proverbially a sight-seeing, open-mouthed animal, with a vast amount of credulity in his composition. Now were I to write for a twelvemonth on the management of horses, and show how foals are to be treated, managed, and broken until they had broken knees, my readers, after perusing these pages, would lay down the volume and think nothing more about it; but when a Cruiser is advertised for public exhibition in London or elsewhere, as a wild animal reclaimed from a state of nature, crowds rush to behold the wonderful transformation of a lion into a lamb. And then, to crown all, the zebra is introduced as perfectly subdued, with these remarks in the "Daily News"—"But there were evidences on his beautiful skin that the struggle between the steed and his master had been fierce." Again—"This happy result was not brought about without a severe struggle; there were marks yesterday on the beautiful hide that indicated a stern resistance."

Here, then, it was evident that the much-boasted *suaviter in modo* course had been abandoned, and the *fortiter in re* adopted; in other words, that the poor brute had been severely handled. This animal has generally been considered as ungovernable and irreclaimable by man, which, by the way, is all sheer nonsense, for, barring a few individuals exhibited in menageries, caught wild from their native plains, we have had no opportunity of trying our hands on this quadruped. And Oliver Goldsmith says, after speaking of the ferocity of the zebra, "Notwithstanding this, I believe, were the zebra taken up very young and properly treated, it might be made as tame as another animal; and Merolla, who saw many of them, asserts that when tamed (which he speaks of as being common enough) they are not less estimable for their swiftness than their beauty." Again, Dapper informs us that four zebras were sent from Africa purposely to draw the coach of the King of Portugal, and that the experiment was attended with complete success.

My present object, however, is to *enlarge* on the nature, management, and education of young horses. In the first place, then, the horse is naturally nervous and timid; I have seen some with every pore in their skin distilling with perspiration, and have heard others scream from terror. To what are so many accidents with horses attributable? We hear constantly of their taking fright at some object or noise to which they have been unaccustomed, running away, dashing carriages to pieces, or throwing their riders. What so common a fault with horses as shying at objects on the road, or terrified by a bird fluttering out of a hedge? I could adduce hundreds of incidents and accidents with horses which would prove incontestably that the horse is by nature a timid animal. In his wild state also he trusts to his speed, rather than to his hoofs or teeth, to defend himself from his enemies.

Now, as to tractability and docility, the horse is formed to be the slave, as the dog is to be the companion, of man; in short, no animal in the creation, except the dog, is more docile or more easily instructed. Look at the Arab horses; see the dams with their foals lying down at the tent entrance, with the children of the desert rolling and scrambling over any part of their bodies. Would these animals harm by tooth or hoof one of their little playmates? No. Why, then, are not the English horses as quiet and tractable as these? Simply, because they do not experience the same kind treatment and early education of the Arabs.

See also the difference between the trained hunters of the last century and those of the present time. Formerly great pains were taken with young horses to fit them for the hunting field. At the leaping-bar they were taught to jump either standing or running, and at the word of command to go fast and slow. They were practised over hurdles and other fences, and their education was not hurried over with a few brief lessons as now. A snaffle-bridle mouth being then considered of great importance in a hunter, great pains were taken to make young horses go lightly in hand, with ease to themselves and comfort to their riders, and change readily their paces; in fact, training *then* was, as it ever ought to be, a gradual process. What is it now? A four or five year old horse, when not half broken, is ridden by a rough rider *across country,* as it is termed—tumbled into ditches, rolled over gates and hedges, and half-drowned in a brook, and then he is called a hunter!

These horses go rushing and dashing at their fences, and must take them in the manner they have been taught, or will not take them at all; and as for the mouths of many—you may as well pull at an alligator's. I have ridden as bad-tempered horses as any man ever possessed (not excepting Cruiser), which would fight with fore and hind legs, and with their teeth also; but by patience and perseverance, and without punishment, I could make them do almost everything I told them—jump fences, or walk over or through them—follow me like dogs, or go before me—clear brooks or wade through them. In short, there can be little doubt that horses by kind treatment will become as tractable and obedient as dogs.

But in these times the education and familiarization of the horse is never thought of. What does the owner of a stud of hunters know or care about them (generally speaking) as long as they are *fit to go?* Their entire management is intrusted to a head groom, the Master seldom visiting his stables, except, perhaps, to show them to a friend, when, with a cigar in his mouth, and his hands in his pockets, he may order a horse to be stripped to exhibit his condition and proportions, and ask when he will be ready to come out again, concluding with, "D—d splendid animal, Bob, eh? Cost three hundred; quite thorough-bred, and *can go the pace!*" Now, that is about the usual average notice bestowed by his rider in the present day on his horse.

Let us contrast him with one of the olden school, who would not go to his own bed before he had seen his faithful horse well cared for, and prepared for his necessary rest. No inquiries were made by him of a head groom, he judged for himself; he was fond of his horse, and the horse equally attached to his master. On entering the stable the morning after hunting his voice was immediately recognized, and mutual greetings passed between them.

"Well, old friend!" asked the Master, going up and patting his horse on the neck, "how are you, old fellow, after the roll we got together in that confounded ditch?"

The answer was returned by an expressive whinnying, and the application of his large lips to his master's face, or the resting of his head on his master's breast, to be fondled and caressed. In those times the horse and his rider were one in mutual attachment; they cared for each other; each loved the other; and when enjoying his summer run, with a nice cool shed to protect him from the burning rays of the mid-day sun, these friendly interchanges of familiarity still continued between the horse and his owner.

Where are they to be seen now? The old Squire has departed, and another Pharaoh, another petty king, the child of fortune, usurps the throne, who knows not Joseph and his brethren—who knows not his poor dependents, the horse and the dog, save by name, and who uses them as his father did his machinery or his quill. It is to such men as these that lessons in the art of horse-management *are* necessary, although, in my opinion, they will prove quite superfluous, since they have no friendly feeling or kindly disposition towards their horse; and the supervision of the stable will still be left to the head groom, as that of the kennel is to the huntsman. This miscalled system of horse-taming will be imparted, therefore, to those who already practise too many cruelties towards the poor horse. Grooms and stable-boys will be experimenting on his devoted carcass, adding this other to the many tricks already too pregnant with punishment to this unfortunate animal, totally unnecessary and uncalled for.

I do not pretend to affirm that the system of breaking young horses and subduing vicious ones, pursued by my father more than seventy years ago, was an original one, concocted in his own brain, although I am inclined to think that some parts of it were known only to himself. His stud of hunters in his younger days was composed entirely of thorough-bred horses, some of which were such bad tempers that they were obliged to be subdued at first by a process similar, I conclude, to that adopted by Mr. Rarey—at least, attended with the same results; and they would then lie down at the word of command to receive him on their backs, on which he was accustomed to perform in the *open field,* not in the stable or any confined place, feats of horsemanship very much resembling those performed at Astley's.

But all the young horses bred by himself were so instructed for the hunting-field that they would never move from their riders, when thrown from their backs, if a hundred horses went clattering by them in the same field; and in this case it was not necessary that the horse's *rider* should be his *master* also; a child of ten years old, if placed on one of these horse's backs, would receive precisely the same consideration as his breaker. The horse would stand by the boy although a troop of cavalry should pass him, without flinching or moving until he mounted him again, and even were the boy to use the horse's hind leg as a ladder, or his tail as a rope to ascend by to his perch in the saddle, he would stand immoveable the while, without, by look or movement of any kind, attempting to injure him whilst so unceremoniously handled.

Now this system of educating horses might be used with great advantage and benefit to ladies, timid riders, and children, saving them from many fearful accidents; and there is not the slightest punishment inflicted on the horse to render him thus quiet and tractable, not even strapping his leg up for a moment. Confirmed vicious horses may be quickly and easily *subdued* by two or three plans with which I am acquainted, but their disposition is not thus readily altered. They are cowed and frightened, and will acknowledge the power of their conqueror, but of their *conqueror* only; and when placed in other hands, which have not the strength or resolution to enforce obedience, the evil spirit will return. The same, perhaps, will occur in Cruiser's case, which a friend of mine told me happened to a savage Irish, thorough-bred horse, some years ago, subdued by "The Whisperer." The name of the horse I forget, but it was well known. He was, however, at that time in training at the Curragh, but became so vicious that no one could manage him. "The Whisperer" was called in, and within a very short period this violent brute became as quiet as a dog, and appeared to be thoroughly cured of his vicious habits; but the spirit within him was not broken, but subdued only for a time: for when placed in other hands, ignorant of the secret of mastering him, he spurned their authority, broke loose, and killed his groom.

CHAPTER XXII.

Mr. Rarey's System continued.—Stages in a Horse's Education.—A Colt may be backed without being broken.—Horses broken too early in the present day.—The process of Horse-breaking should be gradual.—The great obstacles to getting Horses into Condition.

As Mr. Rarey's system of horse-taming may be purchased for sixpence, and has consequently become public property, the question arises whether it is desirable to adopt his treatment with all young horses indiscriminately or not? There will, of course, be found many advocates in its favour, in preference to the old slow process of horse-breaking. It will be said, "Here is a great saving of time and money,—the thing is done off-hand, the colt subdued and backed within a few hours, and ridden out of the stable-yard. We have done in three hours that which would have taken men of the old school three weeks to effect;

for you could not break your horses much under that time."

The old school reply :—" We could have backed our horses quite as soon as you do, but we did not choose to do so. It is a great mistake to suppose that we were obliged to lunge a colt nearly to death (as some assert) before we dared get upon his back ;—we did nothing of the kind,—and for the best of all reasons ; we did not take advantage of his tired and prostrate condition to mount a colt after lunging, because he had a dumb jockey on his back, according to our system. Colts were not to be backed until they had passed through the first preliminary lessons preparatory to being mounted. You *begin* where we *left off*, entirely reversing the order—we say *necessary* order—in a horse's education. We ground our pupils well in their grammar before we put them into Virgil or Horace. We say, *Dimidium facti, qui bene cœpit, habet ;* in short, we will not get upon a colt's back until we have taught him how to move and change his paces."

I have seen scores, I may say hundreds of horses backed, but not broken. Colts at farm-houses are mounted and ridden about by boys, when scarcely two years old, and made to carry anything, from a sack of corn to a sucking calf ; and a friend of mine had a good-sized pony broken in in this fashion by a farmer, and as quiet as a donkey to ride; but as for guiding him, you might as well have pulled at the head of a gate. He ran away with his servant, who, finding it hopeless to pull at his mouth, shoved his head into a thick hedge, which had the desired effect of stopping him.

A short time ago I watched three stalwart Vulcans in a blacksmith's shop pursuing *their* system of horse-taming, which beat Mr. Rarey's hollow. Two had a colt by the head and fore leg, and one held him tight by the tail, and in ten minutes he was perfectly subdued; for finding all his efforts to plunge, rear, or kick—(whilst tackled fore and aft so unceremoniously)—perfectly futile, the colt gave in after a brief struggle, allowing himself to be handled just as his masters thought fit.

Young horses may be divided into two classes for education or breaking—one, those which have been handled since the day they were foaled, and the other, those which have been allowed to run wild until they are three or four years old—seldom now till the latter period, since it has become the fashion in these fast days to prepare cattle and sheep for the shambles, and horses for the market, at the earliest age, whereby our beef and mutton are sadly deteriorated, and our horses battered and knocked to pieces before they have attained their full growth.

The early training of thorough-bred horses for the turf has perhaps given a colourable pretext for breeders of other horses treating their stock in a similar manner, without considering the difference of weight and work to be applied to each. Even with the feather-weights on their backs, numbers of young thorough-bred horses are strained and screwed up before reaching their fourth season; but what is this in comparison to a colt being shoved along a hard road by a burly farmer of twelve or fourteen stone? A young horse, just six years old, was offered me the other day, which had only changed hands once from the breeder; but from being broken in when two years old, and ridden ever since, he was as much strained and crippled as an old post-horse. We used formerly to consider a horse of nine or ten years old in his prime; but according to the present system, one of that age has done his work.

Now as to breaking colts *à la mode* Rarey, I for one can see no possible advantage in it. In fact, although this mighty secret, or one similar to it, has been known by me ever since I knew a horse from a donkey, I have never had occasion to put it in practice, and never should do so were I to live for fifty years to come, except in extreme cases, and those are very rare indeed. To me the process of horse-breaking must be gradual; I must teach him many things before teaching him to carry me. He must be taught to walk, trot, and gallop by degrees;—to carry his head in proper form;—his mouth must be attuned to the bit, and his limbs directed to their proper action; in short, his whole frame must be prepared step by step to endure the burden, with the least possible strain, before I should think of getting on his back. I would have him *ready* for work before putting him to work. Some may say this is all gammon. Is it? Why then train a man to fight before putting him in the ring? Why teach him the proper use of his arms and legs before he is called upon to use them? Why teach him to stand in an easy position, or to hit straight from the shoulder? Why gradually inure his bodily frame to undergo fatigue and punishment? Why by diet and training harden his muscles? Put a big, burly young countryman, fed on bacon and beer, into the roped arena to face a scientific, well-trained pugilist of half his size, and he would be knocked out of it in ten minutes.

No animal, from a man to a dog, can do his work unless properly trained and in good condition. Compare a raw recruit with a disciplined soldier—both possess the same bodily power, but it is the drill which gives to the trained man his easy carriage and firm step. So it is with the horse. Take a colt up from the grass field,—what is he? Full of fat and flesh; his muscles flabby, and his carcass more fit for the butcher's shop than a riding-school. Suppose you get upon his back within an hour of his being first brought into the stable; you then put, in addition to his own weight of body, already too great perhaps for his legs, eight or ten stone more, without the least preparation to carry this extra burden.. Now, if it requires at least two months to get a hunter (which has been turned loose for the summer) into tolerable condition, and it cannot be well done in less time, if in so little,—is it not reasonable to suppose that a raw colt will require at least the same time, or longer, to be reduced to anything like decent order? And as in the case of the former, so especially in the case of the latter, the exercise must be *gradual and progressive.*

To get hunters into condition, it is customary to commence with *walking exercise* only for the first month, during which one or two doses of physic are generally given. They then proceed to trot and canter for the next month, after which they are considered fit to have a gallop or sweat with a lad of light weight upon their backs. Thus gradual is the process of training horses for the hunting field; and if so much time and caution are to be bestowed on them, is it not quite obvious that *less* ought not to be given to young horses which have never been ridden before, and have in addition a thorough education to undergo? The greatest obstacles to getting horses into condition are the inside fat and flabby state of the flesh, the usual results of long rest and high feeding; and in proportion to the *decrease* of these, will be the *increase* of muscle. This superfluity of flesh and fat in a horse cannot be summarily dissipated by a dose or two of physic and a few sharp gallops; for as the accumulation has been gradual, so must the dispersion of it be so too.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Scrutator's own System of Handling and Breaking Colts.—Country Colt Breakers.—First Lessons with the Halter, the Bit, and the Reins.—Cruel use of the Bearing-Reins in ignorant Hands.—First Hours with the Saddle.—The use of the Voice in the Management of Horses.

To resume my own practice with regard to the handling and breaking of colts, with this disclaimer on my part of professing to teach anything new to those acquainted with horsemanship.

As I have before written, we must in this country divide colts, as we do boys, into two classes, those which, from a home education, know something, and those which know nothing at all, from having been allowed to roam at large in pastures green without having felt the hand of man. The *know-nothings*, therefore, ought to claim attention first.

These we will suppose to have had their liberty until three years old, running wild about the fields with other horses and cattle, although in these days permitted to have the use of a shed in the farm-yard during the winter months; and to such there will be little hesitation in following their dam, another old horse, or perchance a donkey, which has been their companion, into a stable or loose box, from which all articles likely to alarm or injure them should be previously removed. And now having stabled him, the floor being well littered with straw, we must commence with our first lesson of "Handling the Colt."

In the first place, then, do not remove his companion, whether horse or donkey, to whom he has been accustomed, for two reasons; one being that, if you do remove him at first, the colt will be wild to get out of his place of confinement to follow his friend, and run neighing and half crazy round the stable with fear and excitement, either of which would retard your operations for a considerable time; the other reason is, that you can use the quiet horse as the most effectual medium of quieting and handling the colt. I must, however, make one proviso, that you are a quiet, steady man yourself, or you will cut a poor figure in trying to quiet a raw colt. You will have taken the precaution of placing a couple of feeds of corn in the manger of the stall, and by talking to and patting the old horse, having the colt on his right side whilst feeding, the latter will not be alarmed at your approach, gaining confidence from his leader; and after standing in this position a short time, you can proceed to handle him gradually about the head and neck, until he becomes familiarised to your touch, when you may run your hand over every part of his body.

According to the temper of the colt will be the time required to make him submit patiently and without fear to this first operation of handling. Some are very ticklish about the head and ears, and with these you must deal very cautiously and steadily, without showing any impatience yourself, bearing in mind that, as all your after proceedings will be regulated by this first lesson, a whole day, if necessary, would be well spent in being devoted to this purpose. The great object is at first, by gentle means and kind words, and by slow degrees, to divest the colt of all fear of you, and gain his confidence; and when this has been effected, all the other lessons will follow in easy succession. Many horse-breakers are in too great a hurry to set to work with colts, verifying the old adage of "More haste, less speed." They are too impatient to get the halter on their heads, and the bit in their mouths; but nothing is gained by this indiscreet haste. I would not even attempt to put on a halter on a colt the first day of his being taken into the stable; let him remain loose the whole of that day and the same night; visit him regularly; take a bundle of sweet hay, vetches, or lucerne under your left arm when you enter, stand still until he comes up to you, and let him pull it bit by bit, occasionally holding out your right hand to stroke his nose and head. Put no hay or fodder in the rack that day until he is left for the night, and you will find, by returning to the stable at intervals, with a lock of hay or vetches each time, or an apple or piece of bread in your hand, the colt will look for your appearance, and soon follow you about the place like a dog; and as a strange dog which has been given to you, must you commence in treating a new colt; teach him to know you and love you first in the stable, and you can lead him out where you like; and whether it takes a few hours or a few days so to familiarise him, make him your friend before you attempt to make him your slave.

To colt-breakers this will appear to be a great waste of time. They would have haltered the colt, and would have been leading him home within an hour of his first entering the stable; for with the assistance of one or two men, the tackling of a colt is by these rough-and-ready practitioners performed in a very unceremonious manner. Having got the halter on his head, to which a long lunging-rein is attached, the stable-door is opened and the colt allowed to run to the end of his tether, with two or three men holding on to it, ready to pull him up or pull him down, just as it suits their humour. The unfortunate animal is then taken into a field, and lunged round and round until ready to drop from giddiness and exhaustion. This is breaking a colt with a vengeance, but is, notwithstanding, a not unusual *modus operandi* adopted in rural districts by the unscientific horse-tamer.

Allowance must be made for country colt-breakers pursuing this summary method. They derive their means of subsistence from this occupation, and their charge for breaking a colt is, all things considered, very moderate, their object, of course, being to take as many pupils as they can possibly manage in a season, which are generally returned as broken within a month or six weeks. In fact, as soon as the colt will carry well and pass objects on the road without alarm, his education is considered complete, and another taken in hand. That the means resorted to for thus quickly subduing a colt are dangerous, and often attended with unsatisfactory results, few will dispute who have ridden horses just fresh from the breaker's hands. Their education is half complete, and, like boys who have been hurried injudiciously through the first rudiments of Latin and Greek, they will have to commence *de novo* under a more skilful master.

Thus I say that when, whether by Mr. Rarey's plan or the rough usage of a country colt-breaker, horses are bitted and backed within a few hours or a few days of being first handled, it is a bad practice, and fraught with evil consequences to the animal, with no benefit to the owner. The chief object in the instruction of all animals for useful purposes is not to force but to lead them to understand what you wish them to do, and they will then do it willingly. The preliminary step is of course to familiarise the animal to his owner or master, and this will require a little time and patience, with a great deal of kind treatment, as horses and dogs do not often, like young ladies, fall desperately in love with a man at first sight.

After the colt knows you sufficiently to allow his head, ears, body, and legs to be handled without flinching or exhibiting the least signs of fear, you may then rub him over from head to heels with a small wisp of hay, and afterwards with a linen cloth. Let him now see the halter, smell it, and rub his nose against it, holding it in your left hand, and whilst quietly slipping up the noseband, bring your right hand over his head with the strap down to the buckle. A short strap or cord may be attached to the leather halter, about two feet in length, for the first day or two, but the halter should be taken off again before night, as serious accidents sometimes occur from the colt attempting to scratch it off with his hind foot. When accustomed to the halter, lead the colt about the stable until he becomes acquainted with its use, and before putting it on rub his head and ears gently with your hand. As soon as the colt will give his head readily and without resistance to your pull on the halter, he may be led out with a long rein, and if inclined to be skittish or fractious, a *few* rounds at lunging will soon bring him to order, but be careful not to overheat or distress him. Then, by gradually shortening the rein, you bring him up to you again, and after patting and caressing him, lead him about until cool before you return to the stable.

Next comes the "bitting the colt," for which a plain, good-sized, smooth snaffle is the best that can be used at first. This may be put into his mouth without reins, under the halter, for the first day or two. Now with regard to bitting, as it is termed, nothing can be more absurd, independent of its cruelty, than running a horse's head tight up, in an unnatural position, which, from the conformation of his head and shoulders, it is quite impossible for him to maintain without great and unnecessary suffering. Any man with common observation, although unacquainted with the anatomy of the horse, may see by the junction of the head with the neck, or, in plainer terms, how the head is set on, the position in which it must be carried with any degree of comfort to the animal; for the difference between a curved and straight or ewe neck must be obvious enough; and yet, by some very ignorant people, professing to be horsemen, horses, young and old, are forced, by being thus unnaturally reined up, to defeat the very purpose for which the bit is intended; in short, their mouths become as insensible and hardened as a piece of old shoe-leather. A colt should never be obliged to rest or hang his head's weight upon the bit, neither should he be forced to stand with it in his mouth in the stable more than two or three hours at a time. By standing on the bit is meant that the bridle-reins are attached to a dumb jockey or a surcingle on the colt's back, with two other cross-reins from the bit affixed to each side of the stall.

When accustomed to the bit in the stable the colt may be led out with the reins attached to a surcingle on his back, taking care that they do not strain too much on his mouth, which would cause him to rear; for in forming a horse's mouth the greatest care is necessary, and herein lies the chief art of horse-breaking, which so few understand. In a work published a few years since, I remarked on the cruelty practised by coachmen in their tight bearing-reins, by which the mouths of the unfortunate animals under their care are drawn nearly to their back teeth; and often have I witnessed with feelings of indignation hundreds of the finest horses in the world, during the London season, fretting and fuming with anguish against these accursed bearing-reins when standing before the door of a fashionable shop in Regent or Bond Street, with the conceited ass on the hammer-cloth whipping them over the head and ears because under such torture they could not stand still.

The next step in the education of a colt, after he has been accustomed to the bit, is saddling him; and as by this time you have familiarized him both to your hand and voice, this will be attended with little difficulty, the precaution being taken to shorten up the stirrups on to the flaps of the saddle, as a groom does when leading his master's hunter to the place of meeting, to prevent their striking his side. Should the colt show any fear of the saddle, or flinch from its touch, let him see and examine it first before you attempt to place it on his back, and when he will bear its pressure without fear or trembling, lift it on and off his back several times before you let down the girths, which should be shortened in the same manner as the stirrups, taking care not to let go your hold on the saddle with one hand until its position is secured on the colt's back by drawing and buckling the girths with the other; for should the colt by chance throw the saddle he will be very shy of its approach for a long time afterwards; and having seen this occur from the carelessness of grooms, I suggest the precaution of keeping a firm hold of it with one hand until it is secured by the girth, in drawing which great caution must be observed that they are not too suddenly tightened.

I once saw a colt-breaker kicked, saddle and self, out of the stall, by placing a saddle with old girths on a colt, and drawing them too tightly at first. The horse sprang up from the ground, immediately began plunging and kicking violently, burst the girths, and throwing off the saddle, kicked it and the owner thereof clear from him before he would be satisfied; and yet this colt was naturally of a good temper, but alarmed at the too sudden and too tight pressure of these unusual bandages round his body. It was invariably my practice with our own young horses, which were broken at home (when keeping a stud of brood mares to supply me with hunters), to accustom the colts to a cloth and surcingle round their bodies almost from the first day of their being handled, so that they were thoroughly used to this kind of pressure long before a saddle was placed upon their backs; and I am quite satisfied by experience that our *gradual* system of breaking, although apparently slow at first, was eventually the most successful, without risk of life or limb to man or animal.

Another part of our education, and a very necessary one, was to teach our colts to do what we required of them by the voice, without whip or spur. Stand still, come on, go on, walk, trot, or gallop, are terms soon understood by a horse when continually repeated, with a corresponding movement of his breaker; and it is of great advantage to a horse to understand by the voice, instead of by whip or spur, what he is required to do to prepare himself for the action. For instance, by the common usage, when wanted to trot, a dig of the spur in his side, or a cut from whip or stick, springs the horse at once into a canter, from the sudden pain inflicted; he is then pulled up again, when, from another cut or dig in the side, he again breaks out as before. This is repeated, perhaps, several times, the rider being angry, and the horse bewildered from not knowing what to do.

Now all this unpleasantness would be obviated by the horse understanding at once by the voice for what action he was to prepare, and this ought always to form a part of his education. It is surprising how soon even wild animals and birds become accustomed to our voice, and understand our meaning; as an instance of which I may mention that, in the month of May last, a pair of moor-hens or water-hens built a nest on the bank of a pond near the house in which I was residing, where they hatched and reared six young birds, which, on my calling the ducks to be fed, swam directly across the water, and came to the lawn to partake of their food, whether grain or meal; and so impudent had the old cock become that he pecked the ducks when they interfered with his children feeding, and was quite master of the party.

How much may be expected, then, of that noble and sensible animal, the horse, would his thoughtless owners take the trifling trouble of instructing him in his duties by gentle words and gentle treatment!

CHAPTER XXIV.

Mr. Rarey's System investigated.—The greater part of what is valuable in it long known to all Horse-breakers.—Contradictions involved in the System.—Grave objections to Mr. Rarey's Method of "Gentling" Horses.—It is not necessary to throw a Vicious Horse for the purpose of subjugating him.—Fundamental point of Difference between Mr. Rarey's System of Horse-breaking and Scrutator's.

In the remarks which I may make on Mr. Rarey's work or system of horse-training, I trust I shall be acquitted of any intentional disrespect towards himself, or of being actuated by any unworthy motives. He has come before the British public as the teacher of a pretended new system of horse-taming. I shall now proceed to investigate the merits of his work, and see whether the instructions therein contained are of any value to horse-owners or horse-breakers in this country.

First, we are told "how to succeed in getting a colt from pasture." The directions under this head were evidently not intended for Britishers, as we have neither prairies nor large plantations, where *herds of horses* "may be as *wild as the sportsman's birds,* and require the same gentle treatment if you want to get them without trouble." We conclude from Mr. Rarey's allusion to the "hunter's driving the quails into his net," that his modern system of horse-taming was first promulgated with the view of enlightening his own countrymen, not ours, which will at once strike every Englishman acquainted with the management of horses on the perusal of this work; indeed, there is scarcely one useful suggestion or caution recommended throughout its pages, in reference to breaking or handling colts, which has not been known to horse-breakers and grooms in Great Britain for centuries past. Still, we will follow Mr. Rarey step by step, and *accompany him,* as requested, through "his whole task of breaking."

We are now told "how to stable a colt without trouble," and the information under this head would excite the risibility of any stable-boy—*videlicet* :—"The best way to do this is to lead a gentle horse into the stable first, and *hitch* him, then quietly walk around the colt, and let him go in of his own accord." Well, I suppose ninety-nine horse-breakers or grooms out of a hundred have adopted this course from time immemorial, as the most easy and sensible plan of getting a colt into a stable, and I believe no man of common understanding would think of running after and trying to frighten the colt by shouting or raising his arms. We are then instructed, "As soon as he is in, remove the quiet horse and shut the door." Most people in this country would have sufficient sense to shut the door *first,* lest the colt might feel disposed to walk out again *sans ceremonie,* and remove the quiet horse *afterwards*, for John Bull knows tolerably well that old saying about *one bird in the hand being worth two in the bush;* and when he gets hold of a wild horse, or any wild animal, he takes pretty good care to place his prize in a place of security, from which there is no exit through door or window.

Mr. Rarey proceeds next to inform us, "This will be his (the colt's) first notion of confinement, *not knowing how he got into such a place, nor how to get out of it.*" To this condemnatory reflection on the colt's intellect I must demur, for although in Mr. Rarey's supposition "the horse has never studied anatomy," I cannot concede that any horse is such an ass as not to *know his way out of a stable,* although it may puzzle his brains, as well as his master's occasionally, *how* to *get* out of his place of confinement, locks and bolts being strong barriers against the egress of bipeds or quadrupeds.

Well, having stabled the colt, we are now to have fifteen or twenty minutes (whilst the horse is eating a few ears of corn, and examining his apartment) "to reflect on the best mode of operations, for in horse-breaking it is highly important that you should be governed by some system, and you should know, before you attempt to do anything, just what you are going to do, and how you are going to do it." Here is some very good advice, applicable to all systems; but as it would occupy about fifteen or twenty minutes to read through Mr. Rarey's new method of horse-taming, we may suppose it is intended that the tyro in horse-breaking should sit upon a stumbling block or stool outside the stable door, engaged in digesting this work whilst the colt is employed in munching his few ears of corn within, and taking a survey of his apartment. We are informed also that "this is the *proper* time to see that your halter is ready and all right." Well, we Britishers have a notion that the *proper* time for preparing and getting ready our tackle, whether for angling, shooting, hunting, or horse-breaking, is *before we* *leave home,* and not when arrived at the scene of action.

Then as to " the kind of halter." We generally use a leather one, in preference to a hempen, or, as Mr. Rarey calls it, a *rope halter,* so that there is nothing very novel in this suggestion. Before using the halter, we have remarks on the horse in these words :—" But before we attempt to do anything more with the colt, I will give you some of the characteristics of his nature, that you may better understand his motions. Every one that has ever paid any attention to the horse has noticed his natural inclination to smell everything which to him looks new and frightful. This is *their* strange mode of examining everything." Here is a *strange contradiction,* since if it is *his natural* inclination (as before stated) to smell everything, it cannot be a *strange* method of examining everything. In fact, it is not peculiar to the horse to examine unusual objects by scent as well as touch ; all animals instinctively adopt the same course of proceeding—tame as well as wild—even down to the timid hare. It is unnecessary, therefore, to notice further, " the experiment with the rope," or " the suggestions on the habit of smelling." We are told that it is " a *prevailing* opinion among horsemen *generally* that the sense of *smell* is the governing sense of the horse," with a lot of trash under this head from "Faucher," as well as others, about the use of oil and drugs, who probably were no horsemen at all, but merely experimentalists; although we know that by the use of chloroform a horse may be more effectually tamed for the time than by Mr. Rarey's new method.

We are next favoured with some lengthy quotations from Mr. Willis J. Powell's work, published in Europe about the year 1814, on *gentling*, or what we call handling the horse,—about stroking his forehead, rubbing and patting his body and limbs, handling his ears, and pulling his tail, which any groom knows how to practise quite as well as Mr. Willis Powell or Mr. Rarey. Then follow the author's own remarks on Powell's system, which it would be sheer waste of time and paper to make any comments upon, being little more than Powell's story repeated about *gentling*, *rubbing*, and *stroking* the horse, with the additions of—"Ho, my little boy—pretty boy—nice lady—or something of that kind, constantly repeating the same words, with the same kind and steady tone of voice."

To those who scarcely know a horse from a donkey, such instructions may prove perhaps amusing and interesting; but it would be a reflection on the lowest horse-breaker's capacity in this country to think him ignorant of all such things, and the treatment here recommended. Under the next head or chapter we are told " how to proceed if your horse is of a stubborn disposition—if he lays back his ears as you approach him, or turns his heels to kick you, he has not that regard or fear of man that he should have to enable you to handle him quickly and easily, and it might be well to give him a few sharp cuts with the whip about the legs, pretty close to the body, the skin on the inner part of his legs, or about his flank, being thinner, more tender, than on his back. But do not whip him much—just enough to scare him; it is not because we want to *hurt* the horse we *whip him.*"

Then why recommend his being whipped in the most *tender* parts, where the whip is *sure to hurt him,* if you only desire to *scare* him? What an absurd contradiction! " But whatever you do, do quickly, sharply, and *with a good deal of fire,* but always without anger. If you are going to scare him at all, you must do it at once." The meaning of this appears obvious enough, that to *scare* a horse you must give him a thorough *good scarifying,* although there is a proviso added, that you are to refrain from *making him mad* by whipping. This is a new method of gentling a colt with a vengeance, but not calculated to inspire him with any other feeling than horror of his master; for all the after-caressing in the world will not nullify the effects of this *scarifying*—first impressions being difficult to efface from the recollection of boy or colt when made by birch or pig-whip. Now the most likely consequences of this scaring or scarifying a colt would be to drive him over the stalls, or out through the window; and I should conceive he would ever afterwards retain, not a wholesome, but a wholesale fear of mankind. It is as natural for a horse to kick as it is for a dog to bite those whom they think intending to injure them; and a colt may kick, and will kick, from fear as much as from any vicious propensity. What then can be said of a system which recommends scarifying to make him still more fearful, merely upon the *supposition* of his being of a mulish disposition because he lays his ears back? Now if anything will make a colt kick, it is whipping him about his legs and flank.

Next follow instructions "How to halter and lead a colt," in which there is nothing very objectionable, except the holding in your right hand of the aforesaid pig-whip, the very sight of which (if held over his head, as recommended, to assist in adjusting the halter) would be sufficient to frighten a colt which had once experienced its scarifying effects. We are then advised "to have a long rope or strap ready, and as soon as you have the halter on, attach this to it, so that you can let him walk the length of the stable without letting go the strap, or without making him pull on the halter; for if you only let him feel the weight of your hand on the halter, and give him rope when he runs from you, he will never rear, pull, or throw himself, yet you will be holding him all the time, and doing more towards gentling him than if you had the power to shut him right up and hold him to one spot; because he does not know anything about his strength, and if you do not do anything to make him pull he will never know that he can. In a few minutes you can begin to control him with the halter; then shorten the distance between yourself and the horse by taking up the strap in your hand."

Then follow some precautions about leading the colt out of the stable; but so far it does not appear that a scintilla or spark of new light is thrown on our system of horse-breaking, although there is something novel in the directions given under the next head, "How to lead a colt by the side of a broke horse" through a stable door, which

I think few except a drunken or crazy man would think of attempting, seeing there exists no necessity for imperilling the life or limbs of man or horse by such a Quixotic experiment. Under this head are instructions how to attach a colt to a broke horse, which I give in Mr. Rarey's own words:—

"If you want to lead your colt by the side of another horse, as is often the case, I would advise you to take your horse into the stable, attach a second strap to the colt's halter, and lead your horse up alongside of him. Then get on the broke horse and take one strap around his breast, under his martingale (if he has any on), holding it in your left hand. This will prevent the colt from getting back too far; besides, you will have more power to hold him with the strap pulling against the horse's breast. The other strap take up in your right hand, to prevent him from running ahead. This is the best way to lead a colt. You can manage any kind of colt in this way *without any trouble*" (not at all clear to my dull comprehension); "for if he tries to run ahead, or pull back, the two straps will bring the horses facing each other" (with the prospect of knocking each other's brains out), "so that you can very easily follow up his movements without doing *much holding*."

Can you, with two reins or straps in each hand, besides the switch or pig-whip? Why, I conclude this would be harder work than driving a four-horse coach with kickers and *balkers*. But to proceed. "And as soon as he stops running backwards, you are right with him, and all ready to go ahead; and if he gets stubborn and does not want to go, you can remove all his stubbornness by *riding your horse against his neck*, thus compelling him to turn to the right; and as soon as you have turned him about a few times he will be willing to go along."

Here is a precious process, indeed! Just fancy meeting a travelling-carriage with four posters in a narrow road while engaged in this game of *pully-hawly* with a raw colt and a broke horse. Then we are told "how to lead a colt into the stable and hitch him without having him pull on the halter," which may be summed up thus: if you cannot persuade the colt to follow a broke horse, "take hold of the halter close to his head with your left hand, and with your right arm reaching over his back, tap him on the off side with your switch, reaching as far back with it as you can. This tapping will drive him a-head, and keep him close to you. Then, by giving him the right direction with your left hand, you can walk into the stable with him. Never attempt to put the colt into the stable, that would make him think at once that it was a dangerous place, and if he was not afraid of it before, he would be then."

Then "if you want to hitch your colt put him in a tolerably wide stall, which should not be too long, and should be connected by a bar, or something of that kind, to the partition behind it, so that after the colt is in he cannot get far enough back to take a straight backward pull on the halter; then by hitching him in the centre of the stall, it would be impossible for him to pull on the halter, the partition behind preventing him from going back, and the halter in the centre checking him every time he turns to the right or left." Well, I *guess* the Britishers, without pretending to be very '*cute*, know how to hitch a colt after a better fashion than this suggested by Mr. Rarey. But we are enlightened as to "the kind of bit, and how to accustom a horse to it," on which it is unnecessary to make any observation, as this kind of bit has been in constant use for many generations, and there is nothing new in "letting the colt run loose without any reins to it in a large stable or loose box until he becomes used to it." Neither is there any improvement on our plan in the directions about "how to saddle a colt," to prevent the stirrups flying about and hitting him, and the girths alarming him by being drawn too tight at first. Now we are told "how to mount the colt" with a block to mount from, which we are informed has *three advantages*, although I am obtuse or perverse enough not to see *one*, but just the reverse, for should this said block be sent rolling against the colt's legs, which is not at all unlikely to happen on first mounting him, it would set him snorting, jumping, and kicking directly, at once overturning all "assurance of confidence and absence of fear which cause him to stand without holding;" and my impression is, if the block in question were sent rolling against or between the colt's legs, Mr. Rarey himself would find some trouble to hold him, unless he had undergone a thorough good *nosing* with the block previously, or been used to the game of skittles.

Britishers are accused of being very great fools, but we must be bigger fools still not to know how to mount a colt without using a block to stand on, and "how to ride him" afterwards, without taking a leaf out of Mr. Rarey's book. We know all about "getting on and off his back a good many times before we take him out of the stable," and when out of the stable we calculate on understanding how to manage him with or without a martingale. "The proper way to bit a colt" follows, which is putting the cart before the horse, as bitting should precede mounting; and under this head we are told that "farmers often put bitting harness on a colt the first thing they do to him, buckling up to the bitting as tight as they can draw it, to make him carry his head high, and then turn him out in a field to run a half day at a time." This is one of the worst punishments that they could inflict on the colt, and very injurious to the young horse that has been used to running in pasture with his head down. I have seen colts so injured this way that they never got over it. As we are told farmers (meaning, I suppose, American farmers) often do these things, it is very evident that this modern art of horse-taming was published for their especial instruction and edification.

Under the next head, "How to drive a horse that is very wild and has any vicious habits," strapping up the foreleg is recommended, as "there is no process in the world equal to it to break a kicking horse, for several reasons; first, there is a principle of this kind in the nature of the horse, that by conquering one member you conquer to a great extent the whole horse. You have, perhaps, seen men operate upon this principle by sewing a horse's ears together to prevent him from kicking.

I once saw a plan given in a newspaper to make a bad horse stand to be shod, which was to *fasten down* one ear." (Does this mean nailing it down?) "There were no reasons given why you should do so; but I tried it several times, and thought that it had a good effect, though I would not recommend its use, especially stitching his ears together."

Well, Brother Jonathan has some queer *go-a-head* notions about horse management. But what would be said to *stitching* a bad horse's *ears together*, or fastening them down every time he was shod, to prevent him kicking? I rather think Mr. Martin's act would be decidedly at variance with this principle; and what will be thought of Mr. Rarey, with all his philosophy and *gentle art*, battening down a horse's ears? A twitch is sometimes applied by us to the ear of a vicious horse, to *hold him* until the blacksmith takes up his fore-leg to begin shoeing him; and we knew, before Mr. Rarey did us the honour of a visit, that a horse cannot kick very easily when standing on three legs, although few would practise this cruelty of *driving him some distance* when thus manacled, as advised. "If he is the most kicking horse that ever raised a foot, you need not be fearful of his doing any damage while he has one foot up, for he cannot kick, neither can he run fast enough to do any harm; and if he is the wildest horse that ever had harness on, and has run away every time he has been hitched, you can now hitch him in a sulky, and drive him as you please. If he wants to run, you can let him have the lines, and *the whip too*, with perfect safety, for he can go but a slow gait on three legs, and will soon be tired."

Now of all the cruelties (necessary operations omitted) upon the poor horse, I say that whipping him along a hard road on three legs in an American sulky is one of the most diabolical and cowardly acts that the greatest brute in human shape could devise. A merciful man is merciful to his beast, and these lines of Pope's may be taken in an extended meaning—

> "Teach me to feel another's woe,
> To hide the fault I see;
> That mercy I to others show,
> That mercy show to me."

I must confess my thorough disgust at the combination of cruelty and twaddle about *gentling* horses mixed up together in these pages, and have scarcely patience to proceed further; but I trust that in this country we have sufficient good sense, as well as proper feeling, to prevent such unnecessary and barbarous punishment being inflicted on the most vicious horse.

To this *humane* new method succeeds a long dissertation on "Balking," which will probably prove very serviceable to American teamsters, with copious directions how to start and manage a balking horse or a balking team, about which the commonest British carter or waggoner knows quite as much as Mr. Rarey. There is nothing save the most common-place observations and instructions under the two next heads or chapters: "How to break a horse to harness," and "How to hitch a horse in a sulky." Now at last I conclude we have arrived at the *grand secret*—the wonderful discovery in the modern act of horse-taming—"How to make a horse lie down," for the possession of which our unsuspecting countrymen have been mulcted, as I am told, in the sum of twenty-five thousand pounds or more.

Now it is quite clear that the art of making a horse lie down is neither a new discovery, nor any novelty at all to many horsemen in this country. "Then why," it has been said, and may be asked again, by Mr. Rarey's supporters, "why has this knowledge never been before communicated to the public?" Simply because it was observed as a family nostrum or trick by some, and by others regarded as likely to occasion more punishment to the horse than benefit to his rider. For the purpose of *mounting* a horse only, it is evident there is no necessity whatever to make him assume a recumbent position, from which he always rises with difficulty to himself, and a very unpleasant sensation, if nothing more, to his rider. Those who are fond of teaching animals to perform tricks may take pleasure in making their dogs stand up and beg, and their horses lie down to be mounted at the word of command; but to talk or write of the utility of such tricks and manœuvres, in a general point of view, would be ridiculous.

Now, then, we come to discuss the utility of the plan, if used as a means of *subjugating vicious horses;* and, first, we will see what Mr. Rarey writes on this subject, "How to make a horse lie down:"—"To make a horse lie down, bend his left foreleg, and slip a loop over it, so that he cannot get it down; then put a surcingle around his body, and fasten one end of a long strap around the other fore-leg, just above the hoof. Place the other end under the surcingle, so as to keep the strap in the right direction; take a short hold of it with your right hand; stand on the left side of the horse, grasp the bit in your left hand, pull steadily on the strap with your right; bear against his shoulder till you cause him to move. As soon as he lifts his weight your pulling will raise the other foot, and he will have to come on his knees. Keep the strap tight in your hand, so that he cannot straighten his leg if he rises up. Hold him in this position, and turn his head towards you; bear against his side with your shoulder, not hard, but with a steady, equal pressure, and in about ten minutes he will lie down. As soon as he lies down he will be completely conquered, and you can handle him as you please. Take off the straps, and straighten out his legs; rub him lightly about the face and neck with your hand, the way the hair lies; handle all his legs; and after he has lain ten or twenty minutes let him get up again. Repeat the operation three or four times, which will be sufficient for one lesson. Give him two lessons a-day; and when you have given him four lessons he will lie down by taking hold of one foot."

"As soon as he is well broken to lie down in this way, tap him on the opposite leg with a stick when you take hold of his foot, and in a few days he will lie down from the mere action of the stick." Here then, according to Mr. Rarey's plan, a horse must be thrown on his knees from twelve to sixteen times before his tuition will be complete in this useless manœuvre; and I am quite sure that no man of common sense and common feeling would subject a valuable horse to this harsh treatment, by which his knees must be sorely bruised, if not otherwise injured, for the vain, puerile gratification of making him lie down.

Having before expressed my opinion, from which no arguments will turn me, that the process of breaking colts ought to be gradual, to be efficient, I have only one point left for consideration — whether this method of throwing is a *necessary* step towards the subjugation of a vicious horse? Being from long experience thoroughly acquainted with the nature and habits of the horse, and having ridden some as vicious animals as any man ever possessed, I say, with the knowledge of a plan somewhat analogous to Mr. Rarey's (although devoid of cruelty and punishment), the *necessity* never arose for my putting my plan in execution; and I am quite satisfied that the greatest brute that ever existed in the shape of a horse may be made tractable and obedient without the use of such means—ever bearing in mind this necessary caution, which should be written in large letters over the loose box or stall of every naturally bad-tempered horse: *Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurrit.*

I will now only briefly take notice of Mr. Rarey's two last chapters—"How to make a horse follow you, and how to make him stand without holding," in which I am sorry to find the too frequent use of the whip again thus recommended:—"Every time you turn, touch him slightly with the whip, to make him step close up to you, and then caress him with your hand. He will soon learn to hurry up to escape the whip; and if he should stop and turn from you, give him a few *sharp cuts about the hind legs,* and he will soon turn his head towards you, when you must always caress him. A few lessons of this kind will make him run after you when he *sees the motion of the whip;*" which, if it means anything, means this:—that the horse must be terrified into following his master. Here again, as in many previous instances, Mr. Rarey's ideas on horse-taming are totally at variance with my own; in short, taking his work from beginning to end, we differ nearly *toto cœlo* in regard to the breaking and management of colts and horses.

If my observations upon Mr. Rarey's system of breaking colts and subjugating refractory horses appear too severe, I have only to say, that my sole object is, as it ever has been, to save that most useful but much-abused animal, the horse, from the infliction of greater cruelties and hardships than it is his lot still to bear. One would suppose, from all the fuss and work which has been made about breaking horses, that they were just caught up from their wild state on the plains of South America, instead of being quiet, sensible, domestic animals, whose parents and progenitors have been in bondage to man for centuries past.

Rough treatment will generally produce rough tempers in boy or colt. Some horses are, no doubt, more viciously disposed than others, but it is not by harsh means that the worst-tempered are to be reclaimed. Firmness, patience, and perseverance are the necessary requisites in any man who pretends to be a colt-breaker; and by these the most refractory animals may be subdued, without having recourse to the objectionable modes recommended by Mr. Rarey. There is an old saying, that "hunger will tame a lion," and I remember to have seen this verified, in a poor, wretched, half-starved lioness, in a menagerie upon a small scale, where deer, dogs, cats, and animals and birds of almost every variety, were all huddled together in a small comfortless yard in the New Road. The poor lioness was, indeed, an object of compassion in her miserable den—lean, spiritless, and so thoroughly tamed by long abstinence, that my heart melted at the sight of her prostrate condition; and, save for the bairns at home, I certainly should have been instigated to purchase her, and try my hand as a lion-tamer.

I do not, however, mean to insinuate that a vicious colt should be nearly starved to death to conquer his temper; but a short abstinence from food will induce him to eat from his master's hand, and thereby be the means of familiarizing more effectually than by whip or spur. With our splendid breed of horses, superior to every other in the world, for size, symmetry, power, and speed, we are a long way behind other civilized people in their domestic management, and the due appreciation of their most valuable services. We are too much in the habit of considering horses as mere beasts of burden or draught, without regard to those qualities of sagacity and intelligence which require encouragement only on our part for their more clear development. It is a common occurrence to see even viciously-disposed horses become gentle and tractable when ridden by ladies, the cause of which is obvious—that they are not insensible to the kind treatment received from the fair equestrians, bearing so strong a contrast to the rough usage they almost invariably meet with from their lords and masters.

THE END.

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